



FALL 1994

Volume 66, No. 3



WYOMING  
**ANNALS**

Pardon me while I get sentimental....

## EDITOR NOTES

The impact of T.A. Larson on the lives of Wyoming's citizens is incalculable, but there is enough anecdotal evidence to substantiate the hypothesis that he has affected more lives in a positive way than any other individual in our state's history. Larson's influence in the classroom during his forty year teaching career at the University of Wyoming was enormous. No matter where you are in Wyoming, it is not difficult to find someone who took one of his history courses. The names that pop up from his class attendance rolls read like a Wyoming *Who's Who*. Women such as historian Lola Homsher, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Velma Linford, and Wyoming Secretary of State Kathy Karpan. And men such as U.S. Senator Al Simpson, Wyoming media mogul Jack Rosenthal, and history teachers Sydney Spiegel, Roy Jordan, Bill Bragg and Bill Dubois. Many others deserve mention, and probably each has a story to tell about Larson.

Pete Simpson, University of Wyoming Foundation Director, remembers when he and his brother Al were in Larson's Western History class in the early 1950s. During an exam, the ill-prepared Pete leaned over toward his brother for the answer to a question. He heard Al whisper, "Sancho." Pete went to work. Weaving a tale out of whatever threads he had picked up in class, the neophyte historian wrote an essay on a trapper named "Sancho," taking him down the Natchez Trace, following him to Santa Fe and finishing his paper with a Simpsonian flourish. After the exam he walked into the hall to thank his brother for giving him the answer, "Sancho." "No," said Al, "I said St. Joe," referring to the Missouri River jumping off place for overland traffic west. In panic Pete proclaimed, "Oh, God, I've got to get that test back!" But T.A. was gone. Somehow Pete passed the course, but when he returned to the campus in 1962 with the intention of obtaining a master's degree in history, Larson told his former student that Pete might be better suited as a lawyer or salesman. Simpson assured the professor of his convictions, and eventually Larson assented. "But no more tests like the one you wrote for me," he said. "You're gonna have to 'stir your stumps.'" Later Simpson served alongside his mentor in the state legislature, an experience doubly rich for him because of T.A.'s knowledge of history.

Another Larson protege, Jack Rosenthal, tells this story. Jack was a senior majoring in history when he and former Wyoming basketball player, and later UW coach, Moe Radovich decided that basketball coach Ev Shelton had been relegated to the background in a push to recognize football coach Bowden Wyatt. The two students took a couple of five-day trips through the state to raise enough money to buy Shelton a Cadillac. Despite the fact that Athletic Director Red Jacoby phoned ahead of them in an attempt to dry up their sources, the two were successful in raising the money. Not long afterward, as Jack walked down the hallway of the Arts and Sciences Building on campus, he heard T.A. Larson call him. Dr. Larson asked Jack where he had been and listened to the explanation, whereupon TA looked at Rosenthal and said, "A cadillac for the basketball coach ...your old history professor would have settled for a new set of tires for his car!" The student felt the branding iron. He

knew Dr. Larson didn't want a new set of tires for his car, but the message was clear. Jack had lost perspective on what was important. To this day Rosenthal is reminded of the incident whenever he feels he is veering off the track.

For forty years Larson's career has been capsulized in *Who's Who in America*. His books and articles will be read as long as there are libraries. The lessons he taught in the classroom will remain in the memories of his students and will be reflected in their accomplishments for years to come. But it is the humanity of T.A. Larson which will gain him a special place in whatever afterlife saints are entitled to inherit. Mary Guthrie, Wyoming Deputy Attorney General, recalls the time when her husband decided to go to law school and she needed a job. It was mid-summer in 1965 and nothing was to be found in Laramie. In her moment of discouragement T.A. phoned, said he understood she was looking for a job, and told her that he needed a secretary. Guthrie lamented, "But Dr. Larson, I can't type." His reply: "Oh, but Mary, you can spell!"

When History Professor Deborah Hardy needed time off to obtain her Ph.D., Larson helped her secure a leave of absence, assuring that she could return to the university to teach. Dr. Hardy, who has been Larson's friend and colleague for more than fifty years, describes him as one of the most intelligent, thoughtful and decent persons she has ever known.

Author Mabel Brown, who worked in tandem with Larson to help plow some historical ground during their careers, is reminded of the time she was having a particularly tough time completing her book, *First Ladies of Wyoming, 1869-1990*. In an attempt to console her, Larson quoted a Latin homily. Mabel complained that she had only three years of Latin and that was fifty years ago. Larson responded with a laugh and told her that, loosely translated, the statement was: "Don't let the bastards get you down."

To students T.A. was a mentor, and to colleagues he was - according to former history professor Bill Steckel - "first among equals." Steckel describes Larson -who headed the UW History Department for twenty years- as a person who led without driving and was able to maintain a sense of departmental collegiality despite the presence of such strong individuals as Gale McGee and Fred Nussbaum.

T.A. Larson has been the catalyst in many careers. That of the *Wyoming Annals* editor is no exception. The three, major jobs I've held in Wyoming were made possible by Dr. Larson. He brought me into this state on a graduate history assistantship in 1967, recommended me for a teaching job at Sheridan College when the Ph.D program became too stressful, and in 1971 provided a recommendation for state government work, one job that I've managed to hold.

Forgive me, Dr. Larson, if I seem to have lost historical objectivity in this peroration. And I apologize for plagiarizing the final words of Bill Steckel's 1971 biographical tribute to you ...*Te salutamus!*"<sup>1</sup>

1. Roger Daniels (ed.), *Essays in Western History in Honor of T.A. Larson* Vol. 37, Nos. 1,2,3,4, (Laramie: University of Wyoming Publications, October, 1971): xii.

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Printed by Pioneer Printing, Cheyenne

Fall 1994  
Volume 66, No. 3

# W Y O M I N G ANNALS

C O N T E N T S



COVER: NAVY LIEUTENANT JUNIOR GRADE, T.A. LARSON, IN HIS DRESS WHITES, CA. 1945.

BACK: T.A. DRESSED FOR THE "COWBOY BALL" AT THE U.W. ALL-UNIVERSITY DANCE, 1938. Coloring by Craig Pindell.

Photos from the T.A. Larson Collection

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The editor of *ANNALS* welcomes manuscripts on every aspect of Wyoming and Western history. Authors should submit manuscripts on diskettes utilizing WordPerfect or ASCII text, and double-spaced, hard copy to: Editor *Wyoming ANNALS*, Wyoming Department of Commerce, Barrett Building, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002. Manuscripts should conform to *A Manual of Style* (University of Chicago Press). They are reviewed by members of an editorial advisory board and the editor makes decisions regarding publication.

*ANNALS* is received by members of the Wyoming State Historical Society and is the Society's principal publication. Current membership is 2,150. Membership dues are: Single \$9, Joint \$12, Institutional \$20. Copies of *ANNALS* may be purchased from the Wyoming Department of Commerce. *ANNALS* articles are abstracted in *Historical Abstracts* and *American History and Life*.

# A WEST OF ONE'S OWN



BY  
VIRGINIA  
SCHARFF

MARK JONES

**B**ut, you may say, we asked you to write about women and the West ...what has that got to do with Virginia Woolf? I will try to explain. In October, 1928 novelist and essayist Woolf was asked to deliver lectures on the topic of "women and fiction" at two prestigious, but impoverished, English women's colleges: Newnham and Girton. The result was Woolf's classic feminist work, *A Room of One's Own*. I commend this book as indispensable to the culturally literate American. Among other important things she said in her lectures Woolf observed that despite all the verse and prose that men had addressed to, and written because of, women, virtually nothing was known of women's everyday lives. Plenty of attention, of course, had been paid to man's past. Woman, said Woolf, "pervades poetry from cover to cover; she is all but absent from history."

Virginia Woolf called for a new women's history to balance what she found was lopsided. "What one wants," she observed, "is a mass of information: at what age did she marry; how many children had she as a rule; what was her house like; had she a room to herself; did she do the cooking; would she be likely to have a servant?"

Historians in the past quarter-century have taken up Woolf's challenge. Hundreds have worked to answer and reformulate these questions. Those who have tried to find out about

women's lives have hewed out a historical room of our own in the immense archive of history and deposited in it a great many volumes of useful and sometimes disconcerting information. We know at what age women married, and we now also know that many did not marry at all, or married several times, or died before they were old enough to marry. We know fertility rates, but we also know about childlessness, and death in childbirth, and all kinds of different ways that mothers treated their children. Women's houses have been as varied as houses *per se*. Few women had (or have) rooms to themselves, though today more women than ever live alone. Most cooked ...and still do. Women had servants, and reciprocally were servants. And so it goes.

Those who prefer to catalogue archival material a little differently might not see women's history occupying a room of its own, but instead might see a shelf or two among dozens in rooms containing other historical topics: France or New England; slavery or medicine; the twelfth or the twentieth century. But whether we put all the "women books" in a separate room or squeeze them onto increasingly crowded, separate shelves, we run the risk that all this counting, recovering and detailing of women's lives will be simply ignored, and in the ignoring, falsified. If the base and noble things women have done are known only to a few, and disregarded in the main, it becomes easy enough to pretend that they—or anybody else for that matter—never mattered.

Something like this has happened in the room designated as the repository of works on what we call the American West. For a couple of decades now there has been a body of writings and conversations called "Western women's history." We have learned some things about women who have inhabited, commented upon, transformed and been transformed by, the West as region, frontier, myth and as a

way of producing and using things. We know that we can no longer talk about "Western" women without putting the word in quotes, because for Native American, Mexican American, and Asian American women the word "West" has often meant colonization.

Taking this diverse and changing group of women on its own perplexing, sometimes contradictory, terms, we have generated a mass of information. We have names, dates, life expectancies, habitation patterns, political affiliations, occupational profiles, poverty statistics, incidences of encounters with violence. We have women's writings, poetry and novels, wills and deeds, diaries and letters, scientific treatises and nature studies, and histories. In my office the shelves set aside for works on "Western" women's history are literally overflowing.

And yet, though I hear mainstream "Western" historians making rhetorical gestures in the direction of women's history, I often wonder if these gestures aren't what basketball coaches call "head fakes." They seem to say that we need to know women's history to understand Western history, but I remain unconvinced that they believe what they're saying. They assert confidently that leaving women out is like doing a jigsaw puzzle with half of the pieces missing, but their own renditions of Western history sound suspiciously like the reconstruction of a puzzle by someone who is willing to leave half the pieces blank.

Claiming ignorance of women's history when the subject has been neglected is one thing. It's another thing altogether to be ignorant of the things women have been and done, and had said and done to them, when so much knowledge has been so painstakingly gained. And it's yet another, more pernicious thing to relegate women's lives and works to the margins of significance by patting women's history on

the head and sending it off to bed.

Ignoring women's history while pretending to attend to it falsifies women's past. This widespread and patronizing dismissal has consequences not only for the dead, but for the living.

And so—to offer a paltry sequel to Woolf's masterpiece—what one wants, now that gathering a mass of information is a project well-launched, is a mass of recognition. Those of us who are already convinced that women's history matters will have to make the point over, and over, and over again, spreading the word near and far. We will have to outright refuse to be hefted aboard and set aside, stowed in the luggage bin as history moves on to the next destination. Instead, at the risk of being seen as impertinent baggage, we'll have to demand a seat in first class.

The need to keep repeating, and insisting upon, the facts of women's history lest they be acknowledged and erased, struck me very forcefully one day last winter. I was beginning another semester teaching American women's history at the University of New Mexico, and explaining to the class how women's past had been distorted, obscured, falsified. I offered two examples to prove my point, one involving a seventeenth-century Flemish painter named Judith Leyster, a pupil of the master Franz Hals, although—as some would have it—an accomplished imitator. It seems that the Metropolitan Museum in New York was cleaning a much-prized painting attributed to Hals, and discovered that the picture had been signed, instead, by Leyster. Was Judith Leyster then elevated to the rank of master for having produced a great painting? Of course, you can guess the punchline. The painting was re-examined, found wanting in quality and consigned to the basement.

The other example involved recent history, my own memory of an incident involving a "Western" woman. I recalled watching on television the 1984 winter Olympic games held at Sarajevo. The announcers on this particular evening were gushing over the achievement of a young man named Bill Johnson, whom they celebrated as the



J.E. STEIMSON COLLECTION, WYOMING STATE MUSEUM

*Redcross and Turkey Red Wheat, Dry Grown, U.S. Experiment Station, Newcastle, Wyo., 1908*

first American to win a gold medal in an Olympic downhill skiing event. "Wait a minute," I said to my husband who was also watching, "Didn't an American skier named Debbie Armstrong win the giant slalom two days ago?" She had. We'd seen the event on television. "Well what's the deal? I suppose she doesn't count as an American because she's a girl? What is this? In two days, they've already wiped out her medal and given it to a man?" As I watched the Olympics that year the lie was repeated over and over, and Debbie Armstrong's great run down that Olympic slope was erased. The first American gold medal was stolen, again and again, to be put into the hands of Debbie Armstrong's male teammate.

As I told the story to the hundred students in my women's history class, hoping to fire them with enough indignation that they would want to learn the stuff that would set the record straight, I became aware of a disturbance in one corner of the room. When I asked what the fuss was about, several students pointed at a young woman sitting quietly, somewhat dazed, in the middle of the disturbance. "This is her!" a young man behind her yelled, pointing at the woman student. "This is Debbie Armstrong!" I raised an eyebrow. The young woman nodded. She was Debbie

Armstrong, sitting in my history class in Albuquerque, hearing a story I'd been telling for ten years about her. It had happened the way I had recalled. And she had always wondered if anyone would ever notice. And now she was experiencing, in a way most people never do, being given back her history.

Multiply that moment by thousands and millions of possibilities. Imagine what difference it makes when women learn that their lives matter. Imagine what difference it makes when men learn that women's lives matter. Imagine how different your West would look if the real stories of women were part of our collective memory. And then go forth and read the books on the overflowing shelves.

DR. VIRGINIA SCHARFF (1953 - ) IS AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO. IN HER PUBLIC SPEAKING, WRITING, AND COMMITTEE ADVISORY WORK SHE ADDRESSES WOMEN'S ISSUES. CURRENTLY SCHARFF IS RESEARCHING AND WRITING A BOOK ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN WOMEN'S HISTORY AND WESTERN AND ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY. SHE ALSO IS CO-AUTHORING A TEXTBOOK ON THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.



# In Old Wyoming

by Larry K. Brown

## First Lady of Wyoming History Grace Raymond Hebard

Her soft, shallow breath was barely audible to her brother, Lockwood, who sat in grim vigil by her bed. He had been called from his home in Oregon to Laramie, Wyoming, when it became clear to her physician that her days—hours, in fact—were numbered.

To those who knew and loved the slim, starched lady, who "...almost marched when she walked," the past week was particularly sad. It was not unexpected, however. They had watched for more than two years as cancer gnawed at the seventy-five years old's strength and vitality. But given her insatiable curiosity and sense of adventure, she may well have felt in those last, few, lucid moments a sense of exhilaration, anticipating that she would soon be reunited with her deceased parents, her sister Alice, her brother Fred, and her beloved housemate Agnes M. Wergeland. Even more, there was the prospect that finally she would meet the pioneer heroes to whom she dedicated the last fifty years of her life.<sup>1</sup>

Although Grace Raymond Hebard is best known as a western and Wyoming historian, her earliest exploits are as memorable for making history as for preserving it (see box).

Born in Clinton, Iowa, on July 2, 1861, Grace was the third of four children born to Congregational missionary parents.<sup>2</sup> Because of poor health, she was unable to regularly attend public school. Her mother Margaret's home teaching, however, helped make up for that deficiency. So well did Grace learn her lessons that, despite the lack of formal edu-

cation, she went on to earn three academic degrees, including a Doctor of Philosophy degree in political sciences.<sup>10</sup>

Following the death of her father, George Diah Alonzo Hebard, Grace left Iowa with her sister and mother. They moved to Cheyenne in June, 1882, where she was hired as a draftsman in the U.S. Surveyor General's Land Office. She was the only woman in an organization of forty men; yet her initiative and ability to make quality maps from raw field notes earned her a promotion to Deputy State Engineer.<sup>11</sup> It was in that position that she was able to cultivate influential support for the activities to which she remained devoted throughout her life: the suffrage movement, the fight against child labor, and naturalization of citizens.<sup>12</sup> Her supporters also encouraged Governor Amos W. Barber to appoint Hebard to the University of Wyoming's Board of Trustees in 1891. She served as Trustee for thirteen years and Secretary for the organization eighteen years.<sup>13</sup>

So well did she adjust to her new surroundings in Laramie that seven years later she was offered the presidency of the University. She

deferred for what she claimed were "good sound financial reasons," but later took on additional responsibilities when she became the institution's librarian. She also taught political science and economy, and within three years was named head of her department. Despite her success, Hebard's growing power threatened other trustees and faculty members.<sup>14</sup> Although personalities and petty politics seem to have been at the core of the dispute, her once strong base of support had so eroded by 1907 that a scandal erupted in which she was



Grace Raymond Hebard shares a contemplative moment in the wilds with one of her Wyoming hero-pathfinders, Oliver Perry Hanna. In 1878 Hanna travelled north along the Bozeman Trail, being one of the first settlers in the town of Big Horn, Wyoming.

Marilyn S. Bilyeu Collection, Berthoud, Colorado

scolded for being "overbearing, galling and overly influential." She also was formally accused of slandering a fellow faculty member and his spouse. Some even alleged that her doctoral degree was "a pure fake."

Because of the rancor she resigned from the Board. At the suggestion of her companion, Dr. Wergeland, who was head of the history department, Grace plunged instead into a lifelong study of the West and began teaching that subject in 1908.<sup>15</sup> Her new vocation got a boost in 1915 when she took a summer tour of Wyoming, a trip planned by Dr. Wergeland who had died the previous year. The trip spurred Hebard's interest in preserving and marking historic sites. Her participation in the dedication of monuments, in turn, led her to historical material that formed the basis of her books. *The Pathfinders from River to Ocean*, published in 1911, celebrates the lives and times of those who tamed the frontier. Encouraged by the sale of her book, Grace collaborated with western historian E.A. Brininstool to tell a two-volume tale of the miners and settlers who trod *The Bozeman Trail*. Grace then plunged into her third major literary venture, a eulogy of the greatest of the Shoshone chiefs. *Washakie* was published in 1930.

The subject with whom Hebard perhaps is best identified and who is the protagonist of her most famous book, is *Sacajawea* (1933). The Shoshone girl, who in 1805-1806 led Lewis and Clark across the northwestern part of America's new acquisition, came to Dr. Hebard's attention when questions about the guide's

✓ In June, 1882 she was the first woman to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the State University of Iowa.<sup>2</sup>

In 1889 she was one of three who drew up a petition to the Constitutional Convention of Wyoming for adoption of the woman suffrage amendment. She also helped write the Wyoming child labor bill that was enacted into law in 1923.<sup>3</sup>

In 1898 Hebard was the first woman attorney admitted to the Wyoming Bar.<sup>4</sup> Sixteen years later she became the first of her sex licensed to practice before the Wyoming Supreme Court.<sup>5</sup>

She carded sixty-nine strokes for six holes of golf in 1900 at a Laramie course, becoming the first woman to win the Wyoming State championship for that sport.<sup>6</sup>

In 1904 she became the Univ. of Wyoming's first Librarian—a position she held for fifteen years—and helped form the first state library association, becoming its first president.<sup>7</sup>

Hebard was the first person in Wyoming to escort foreigners before the court to apply for their U.S. citizenship.<sup>8</sup>

background and fate were raised at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis. Two years later, when a Wyoming commission investigated the claim that Sacajawea was buried in Wyoming, Grace became stirred to prove the point.

Although Hebard's stories were popular with the masses, more than a few scholars have been less than enthusiastic about what they perceived was a deductive approach to history. It was her insistence, for example, that Sacajawea is buried in Wyoming—contrary to later, conflicting evidence found by historian T.A. Larson—that was the main reason for criticism. According to her detractors, like the surveyor she was trained to be Hebard tended to fix, transit-like, on an idea, then follow a singular path

of reasoning, gathering evidence to prove her thesis. Although undoubtedly disappointed with such criticism, Grace demurred that she was simply a "...humble follower of recording the records of the past."<sup>16</sup> Despite her limitations, however, she contributed much to the history of the West and Wyoming by preserving historic documents and recording eye-witness anecdotes about the taming of the frontier.

Hebard's study of time, however, could not stop its progress. On Sunday, October 11, 1936, as the black hands of the clock touched 9:15 p.m., Grace Raymond Hebard joined the path-breakers to whom she had dedicated so much of her time, talent and tenacity.<sup>17</sup>

1. "Death Claims Dr. Hebard; Funeral Set for Tuesday," *The (Laramie) Republican-Boomerang*, 12 October 1936, pp. 1,7.

2. Janel M. Wenzel, *Dr. Grace Raymond Hebard as Western Historian*, thesis submitted to the Department of American Studies and the Graduate School of the University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming, June, 1960, p. 2.

3. Eva Floy Wheeler, *A History of Wyoming Writers*, privately published, 1981, p. 23.

4. *Laramie Daily Bulletin*, 18 November 1898, p. 4.

5. Wheeler, *A History of Writers*, p. 28.

6. T.A. Larson, *A History of Wyoming*, (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press), 1978, p. 343; also Cora M. Beach, *Women of Wyoming*, (Casper, Wyoming: S.E. Boyer, 1927), p. 122. Hebard won the state championship for women in Wyoming in golf and in tennis for singles, and mixed doubles playing with her brother.

7. Faculty of the University of Wyoming *In Memoriam: Grace Raymond Hebard, 1861-1936*, (Laramie, Wyoming: University of Wyoming, June, 1937), p. 3.

8. Letter from Grace Raymond Hebard, Laramie, Wyoming, to Hazel Krieg, 8 September 1930.

9. Cora M. Beach, ed., *Women of Wyoming* (Casper, Wyoming: S.E. Boyer 1927), p.119. Hebard was baptized Nora, but that name was changed to Grace after she and her family moved west to Iowa City, Iowa from the state of New York in the Fall of 1861.

10. Beach, *Women of Wyoming*, p. 113. Educated at an academy and the State University of Iowa, she graduated in June, 1882 with a B.S. degree. It was while living in Cheyenne in 1885 that she earned a M.A. degree from her alma mater. Seven years later, she earned her Doctor of Philosophy degree from Illinois Wesleyan University.

11. Ione McClain, "Doctor, Lawyer, Engineer, Historian, Teacher," *Wyoming Education News*, XXV, No. 4 (December 1958): 6-7.

12. Wheeler, *A History of Wyoming Writers*, p. 28.

13. McClain, "Doctor, Lawyer, Engineer, Historian, Teacher," p.6; also Beach, *Women of Wyoming*, p.120.

14. Letter from Grace Raymond Hebard to Laura White, 14 February 1935, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie.

15. Wenzel, *Dr. Grace Raymond Hebard as Western Historian*, pp.10-12.

16. Wenzel, *Dr. Grace Raymond Hebard as Western Historian*, pp. 99.

17. "Death Claims Dr. Hebard, Funeral Set for Tuesday," *The (Laramie) Republican Boomerang*, 12 October 1936, pp. 1,7. Following services at St. Matthews Cathedral in Laramie, she was buried in the local Green Hill Cemetery.

**Larry K. Brown is a  
volunteer writer and researcher  
for Wyoming ANNALS.**



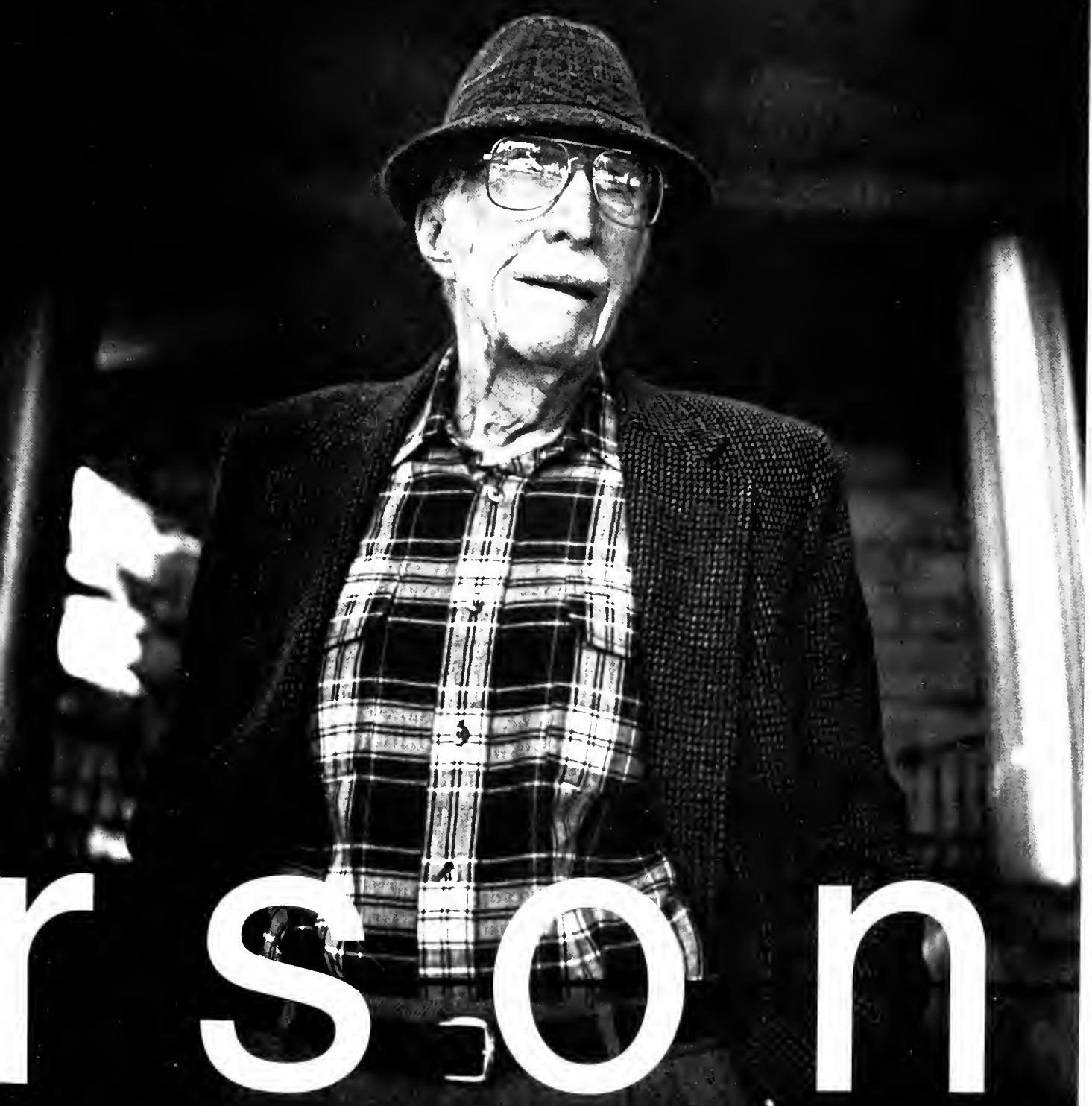
**TA** is the first in a series of interviews with historians to be featured in *Annals*. What follows is an edited, partial transcript of an oral history interview with the "Dean of Wyoming History," Dr. T. A. Larson. It was conducted by *Wyoming Annals* Editor Mark Junge at Dr. Larson's home in Laramie on January 20, 1992. The transcription was made by Kathy Rooney, Computer Programmer Analyst for the Computer Technology Division of the Wyoming State Department of Administration and Information.

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## Conversations with Historians

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HISTORV



*The handsome chap in summer dress whites on the cover of this issue of Annals is navy lieutenant Taft Alfred Larson. "TA" as he is known by many of his friends, associates and students, was born January 18, 1910 in the small, eastern Nebraska town of Wakefield. In order to fill his weak lungs with mountain air he migrated west in 1928, attending the University of Colorado at Boulder. Although he planned to study journalism at the University of Colorado—after all, he was the editor of his high school newspaper—circumstances led him into the study of history and he received his B.A. (1932) and M.A. during the heart of the Great Depression. In 1936, while working on his Ph.D degree at the University of Illinois, TA took a teaching position in Wyoming, eventually becoming an instructor, mentor, colleague and friend to thousands of Wyomingites.*

*Signed up at a salary of \$1,800 per year, the new instructor had to put aside his chosen field of Medieval English history. That's because the job came with the stipulation that TA develop a Wyoming history course to replace one taught by Grace Raymond Hebard. Starting from scratch he constructed a course outline, thus initiating a career teaching state history that lasted, except for the interruption of military service (1943-1946), until 1975. Over a period of four decades TA taught 16,000 students, supervised eighty masters' theses and initiated the History Department's first Ph.D program.*

*When he wasn't teaching Larson was involved in intensive study and writing, and in the process defined Wyoming history. He became the authority in the subject, achieving recognition both as a scholar and a person. The respect he earned from students, peers and administrators was evident in his appointment as chairman of the school's History Department in 1948, a post he held for twenty years. In 1959 UW President George "Duke" Humphrey also*

*made Larson Director of the School of American Studies and from 1968 until retirement he was honored as the William Robertson Coe Distinguished Professor of American Studies.*

*It usually takes employers years to formally recognize the worth of employees and TA was no exception. The University eventually bestowed many honors upon him including the George Duke Humphrey Outstanding Faculty Award in 1966, the institution's highest award—the honorary Doctor of Laws (LL.D) degree in 1984, and the Alumni Association Medallion Service Award in 1985. Larson's free-ranging mind was not confined by the borders of his adopted state, however. In 1970 he was elected President of the Western History Association, a national organization of Western historians.*

*T.A. Larson is the author of four books. Wyoming's War Years (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1954) was his first, begun in 1946 after his return from the Navy. His magnum opus, the redoubtable, History of Wyoming (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965, rev. 1978) is a 663-page work that has been printed five times and revised once. Bill Nye's Western Humor (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1968) features the writing of a nationally-known humorist who was founder of the newspaper, the Laramie Boomerang. Larson's last book is an historical essay, Wyoming: A History (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1977), an exemplary publication in a series of state histories written in celebration of the nation's bicentennial, and one that has seen five printings. Larson authored numerous scholarly articles on western history, and is particularly well-known for his work on the Woman Suffrage movement.*

*In this age of specialization Larson is a throwback to il uomo universale, the "Renaissance Man," or perhaps earlier to the yeoman living in the Golden Age of Greece who dropped his tools and walked*

*to the polis in order to cast his vote or take part in a political discussion. TA was drafted by fellow citizens to play a leader's role in community and state affairs. Among the civic involvements of which he is most proud is his long association with the Laramie Club of Rotary International, beginning in 1938. Only legendary UW Registrar, Ralph McWhinnie, credited with 69 years, has been a member longer. Larson has held office in the Laramie Chamber of Commerce, Laramie Community Chest, and the Albany County United Fund. He has been active in the Laramie Plains Museum Association and was a founding member of both the the Wyoming Historical Society in 1953 and its Albany County chapter. In 1957 he was elected president of the statewide organization. He became the first chairman of the Wyoming Council for the Humanities in 1970, and from 1972 to 1977 was Vice chairman of the Wyoming Bicentennial Committee. He was an obvious choice by Governor Stan Hathaway to serve on the Wyoming Consulting Committee on Nominations to the National Register, and Larson was its chairman from its inception in 1969 until 1980.*

*If, as they say, you become busier after retirement, it was true for TA, who, in 1976 at the age of 66, was solicited by Governor Ed Herschler to run for the Wyoming House of Representatives. A Democrat from Albany County, he was the first university professor elected to the state legislature. There he worked alongside former students, who leaned on him to provide historical perspective on issues of the day. When he retired after his fourth term, TA was the oldest person in the legislature.*

*Dr. Larson is a member of the American Association of Retired Persons and was a charter member of the Wyoming chapter of the National Organization For Women. Although he covets his privacy, particularly after a life of public service, he still is in demand as a public speaker. He lives near the UW campus with his wife, Dorothy.*

Dr. Larson, just to start out with, today is Martin Luther King day. Do you have any reflections on that at all?

Well I think it's an appropriate day. Certainly Martin Luther King was a major figure in American History.

How do you feel about Wyoming and Martin Luther King? I mean, it was a little bit tough to get that holiday though, wasn't it?

Took a little while, yes. Mrs. (Elizabeth) Byrd worked, I heard her say, every day, twelve, thirteen years on that. I was in the Legislature when we passed it. I do think that we're having too many holidays and that there's a limit to when you can close schools and offices. The time is coming when you have to combine holidays the way they've done with Veterans.

Sometimes the schools get off and sometimes they don't.

That's right. I just heard today that only thirteen per cent of the corporations in the country are closing for Martin Luther King Day. That's the lowest percentage of closings for any national holiday. So there isn't much enthusiasm for it.

I think the time is coming, within the next thirty years, probably, when the WASPS —the White Anglo Saxon Protestants— will not outnumber the other people in this nation of ours, and people who've been discriminating against the nonwhite people will find themselves discriminated against.

I think it was Jerry Brown from California who said that half of the population being born today, one out of two is Hispanic.

It's incredible what's happened to Florida and Southern California. It's almost unbelievable the problems that have developed as a result of the great influx. I don't know whether the United States is going to continue to have open immigration. Of course we still shut out some people, send them back to Haiti and so on. But at the rate the Hispanics and Asians are flooding in, and the Blacks are increasing in population in this country, the WASPS may not be running this country much longer.

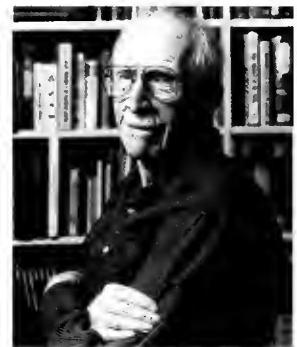
You remember Daniel Johnson, that white supremacist who ran for political office here a couple of years ago. He's living up in Wheatland now. I read one of his brochures. He expressed the fear that the United States was becoming a non-white country and suggested that we better do something about it quick. That we'd better admit only immigrants who can prove that they have at least 1/8th blood from northwest Europe.

Yes. The whites are not going to dominate the world the way they've been accustomed and it's unfortunate that so many whites have discriminated against ethnic and racial and religious minorities. The chickens have come home to roost. We are changing but it's been very slow and there's still a lot of racism in this country.

Why has Wyoming been excluded from the racism problem so much, or have we?

Because there have been so few blacks in Wyoming. There are only, what, 2500 or so now? And only seven or eight thousand Native Americans. Ninety-eight or ninety-nine per cent are white in Wyoming. They said in the Navy in World War II that the Navy could tolerate a few blacks, using them aboard ship as cooks and bakers. For a short time I was commanding officer of the all-Black cook and bakers school at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center. I got along very well because I had the brightest, ablest chief petty officer you ever saw. He just told me what to do and I did it. He was a Chicago lawyer before he joined the navy.

At the cooks and bakers school I felt sorry for my petty officers. On pay day they had to go to a great deal of trouble, catch buses and so on, to get over to the main side at Great Lakes in order to pick up their pay. So I would load them in my car and take them across. Other officers who saw me doing that probably reported it because that was certainly not the way the Navy wanted it done. Officers were not supposed to fraternize with enlisted men in the first place, and Blacks in particular.



Did you ever receive any flack for that?

I didn't, perhaps because I was soon transferred. The commanding officer of the training schools command moved me over to his office and made me the assistant to the executive officer of his operation. So I was sort of a troubleshooter in several training schools. And then later on, the last six months, my assignment was to write a 200-page history of the Great Lakes Naval Training Center in preparation for the administrative histories that they published.

Do you think that Wyoming is any less or any more racist than any state in the Union?

No I don't think so. I think it's about the same. There's a good deal of movement of people back and forth and the only reason that some people think that we're not racist is that there are relatively few minority people. And the problems are different when you have just a very few. I know in my little home town in northeast Nebraska, when I grew up we had one black boy. He was the only Black in town. And there was only one Jew. They were sort of oddities and conversation pieces. We didn't discriminate against them particularly, but certainly we didn't consider them our equals.

You have somewhat of a liberal attitude towards race and other subjects like that.

I learned that very quickly when I enrolled as a freshman at the University of Colorado in 1928. I had a quite liberal mentor there a professor, that I admired very much, and he helped shape my attitude. Erwin F. Meyer was his name. He died of cancer at the age of thirty three, so I knew him only for a few years. He died during my first year of graduate work, when I was his graduate assistant.

What about your background? You came from a small community, Wakefield, Nebraska. You would probably not have had much contact with liberal ideas. What's your predisposition, do you think?

Well, I'm a humanist and I certainly accept the idea that all people are created equal and that color should not be the basis of discrimination against anybody. I don't know where I picked that idea up. Maybe I learned it in high school. I think most of my teachers pushed the idea that we should judge people by their own individual character, not by the color of their skin.

But what I'm talking about is the sense of fairness. Does that come out of your family? Your father? Your mother?

Not particularly. They were both Swedish immigrants with very little formal education, what you might call eighth grade education in Sweden. They were hardworking people strongly motivated by the work ethic. Great believers in education because they had so little of it and they saw that you have to have it if you're going to get on in this world, or it's a big help. So what they did inculcate in us, certainly, was that you've gotta get all the education you can and you've got to try to be the best in anything you undertake. That was driven into us early on. My mother died when I was only eight years old so she didn't have much influence on me, but my father continued that attitude that you've got to be prepared, work hard. But I don't think we ever discussed equality of races or anything like that.

What about equality of sexes? I sense in the work that you've done—both in the National Organization for Women and with your history of the Women Suffrage Movement—that there is more than just a passing interest in this field, that there's something in your upbringing that allowed you to be empathetic to women.

Well I'm not sure when I developed that. It could be as an undergraduate. But my interest in the history of the Womens Rights Movement came here at the University of Wyoming. Because early on I ran into a couple of the myths propagated by Grace Raymond Hebard, two of them. I didn't have to study very much to discover that she was wrong on the Esther Morris story and that she was wrong about Sacagawea. Calling Esther Morris the mother of women suffrage, and so on, ignored all the history of the women's rights movement in this country. When you look at the facts of the matter, it's just absurd. And when you build up Sacagawea the way she did, and bundled a good many falsehoods into that, and when you look into the history of that ...so that I got interested in Esther Morris and secondarily, or in consequence, interested in the women's rights movement. Why did Wyoming lead in the women's rights movement? Who was responsible? How did that fit in with the rest of the

country? This is one of Wyoming's chief distinctions, as I point out. We are called the Equality State and adopted that nickname early. It is an outstanding distinction. It sets us apart from other states.

So my curiosity was piqued and I had to find out why we adopted it. Then I had to find out why Colorado, right next door, and Utah and Idaho, why this block of four states first adopted woman suffrage, or what persuaded them. One thing led to another till that became an absorbing interest. So I had to pursue that. I spent years developing my ideas about that. But early on I accepted the arguments of the great leaders of the women's rights movement in the East. I discovered that the justice of it was there, but you couldn't sell it to the men of that period on the justice argument alone. You had to combine it with other considerations. Like, it would attract population or it would do this or that, you know. A small number of men would go along with the women, and at that famous Womens Rights Convention at Seneca Falls, New York, in 1849 —I think there were about sixty women and forty men— there were quite a few men involved in it.

**Do you think if you had been alive at that time you would have been involved in that?**

It's hard to say. I think I would have got into the antislavery crusade. Most of the women, and men too, who were the early leaders in the East in the women's rights movement, had been previously in the antislavery movement. At least a few moved into the women's rights crusade because they were somewhat racist and they said: "Well, goodness, if we're going to give Blacks the right to vote, these people with no education, what about the women who want their rights?" There was a problem there for the antislavery people who got crosswise with some of the rights being granted to Black men and Black women —less so the Black women— because they were being left out and they were hesitant to concentrate on doing right for the Blacks and forgetting themselves.

**In other words, if you're going to be a progressive you might as well have a consistent stance?**

Well, (laughter) yes, the two fit together. But the women had plenty of grievances. Actually the women back there, Susan B. Anthony and her associates, some of them, what they fought for first was equality in handling money rather than the right to vote. That came later on when they discovered that they were not going to get any control of the finances without first getting an education and the right to vote. But so many of them had been pushed around by patriarchal husbands and given small allowances to do this and that. They wanted to have more control of the family budget. That was the principal reason they got off in that direction. One thing leads to another and these things gradually jell.

**I'm still curious, though, as to why you should be —and not just politically speaking — such a Democrat in your outlook.**

I cast my first vote in 1932 when I was in Boulder, after I had been influenced by my mentor Professor Meyer. But also because I was influenced by Franklin D. Roosevelt. My father was a Republican in a Republican town, county and state. Scarcely any Democrats in my home town. Agriculture people generally saw their economic interest in having protective tariffs. Herbert Hoover won by the biggest margin that any presidential candidate had ever won by, in 1928. In 1932 he lost by the biggest margin. The Great Depression that began in 1929 really caused a lot of questioning about the capitalistic system. Some people went all the way to communism in that period. Some very wise, sensible people went to socialism. Norman Thomas was one. He influenced me to some extent. I heard him speak in Denver one time. A very brilliant lecturer about the rights of man. A lot of young men and women who had been brought up —men in particular—as Republicans, and normally would have followed their parents in the Republican Party, switched in 1932. And quite a few older Republicans switched, too.

**Were you a Republican before that?**

Well I hadn't even voted before, you see, so I wasn't even registered to vote. As I say, it was the first chance I had. I was 21 years old in 1932.

**Did you and your dad have arguments on political issues at all?**

No I don't remember that we did. In fact in the twenties I admired Hoover quite a bit. In the studies we had in history and debate as undergraduates in high school we read about various political leaders. And my inclinations were in the Republican direction. We used to recite "fried rats and pickled cats are good enough for the Democrats." That was a common expression around my home town during election campaigns.

In the introduction to the Bicentennial (Wyoming) history book that you published in 1977, in the *Invitation to the Reader*. General Editor James Morton Smith talks about the authors in this whole series of books. He says: "They have in common only these things. Historical knowledge, writing skill and strong personal feelings about a particular state." I assume then, if you can believe what he says, the reason you were picked as the writer who would write about Wyoming was because you did have strong, personal feelings about Wyoming. Is that true? Do you have strong personal feelings about the state?

T.A., 1940



T.A. Larson Collection

Oh yes, yes, yes. I learned to love Wyoming early on, in fact. My first introduction to Wyoming came while I was at Boulder. I spent four summers in Yellowstone Park: 1931, 32, 33, and 34, and I equated Yellowstone Park and Jackson Hole with Wyoming because during those four years that's the part of Wyoming I knew. No one could associate with those two areas as much as I did in that period without developing a great affection for some aspects of Wyoming. The wildlife, the fishing, the mountains, the Grand Teton Range and the park life up there. That caused me to set Wyoming apart more than anything else. The rest of Wyoming I didn't know very much about because I'd spent my winters in Boulder. In 1931 I went by train from Boulder to West Yellowstone. In 1932 a Korean chap and I bought a 1922 Chrysler sedan for \$25. Can you believe that? This was, of course, during the Depression. Didn't have very good tires and it burned a quart of oil for every fifty miles and so on (laughter) but it got us up there and back. First year was the train, thereafter by autos with very few stops, so I didn't see much of Wyoming. No, I got sort of a false picture of Wyoming, a picture in which Yellowstone and Jackson Hole dominated.

What did you do up there?

The first year I was hired as a yard man. I was supposed to clean up the yard around the cafeteria at Old Faithful. Then they made me a scrubber in the housekeeping cabins. They had cheap cabins with canvas tent tops. We would put up the tent top in the Spring, we'd pull the canvas over the frame and fasten the canvas with shingle nails. Then we'd clean out the rental cabins each morning, spread a little lye around where the tourists had fried fish on the little tin stove and scrub the floor with water. Provide some kindling for them and a little of the dope —we'd mix up kerosene and sawdust and leave a little can full that could be used to start fires. Then they moved me to Mammoth. I was the night watchman there and worked for a while as a scrubber in the housekeeping camps. Then two summers I was the night watchman at the Roosevelt Lodge. I don't know if you're familiar with that. It's a lovely small lodge between Canyon and Mammoth.

How did you get those jobs?

Well I guess maybe there was a recruiter. There must have been someone who told me that there were jobs in Yellowstone. It might have been a fraternity brother who was a summer ranger up there. But at any rate, I applied, got it, and once I was up there I was able to continue for four summers.

And that was your first contact with Wyoming?

That's right. Well not quite. In 1929 when I was a sophomore at Boulder, several of us drove up to Laramie and out on the Lincoln Highway to Utah to follow the football team. We had a great football team, we thought! So we took a weekend off to drive out there. Had nine flat tires along the gravel highway! They were just starting to oil the roads. So we had to stop and patch tires. The game was in Salt Lake City, a game between the University of Colorado and Utah.

And you had nine flat tires?

Believe it or not, nine flat tires. And we could patch them pretty fast. Well, it no doubt added a couple of hours to the trip. We skipped classes on Friday. All five of us piled in a room in Hotel Utah. But at any rate, we drove up and coming back we came through Colorado over the mountains. For some reason we didn't have any flats coming back.

Who won the game?

Utah beat us 40 to nothing! So it was a long way home!

I would say your first contact probably gave you a truer sense of what Wyoming was about than your summers up in the northwest corner of the state.

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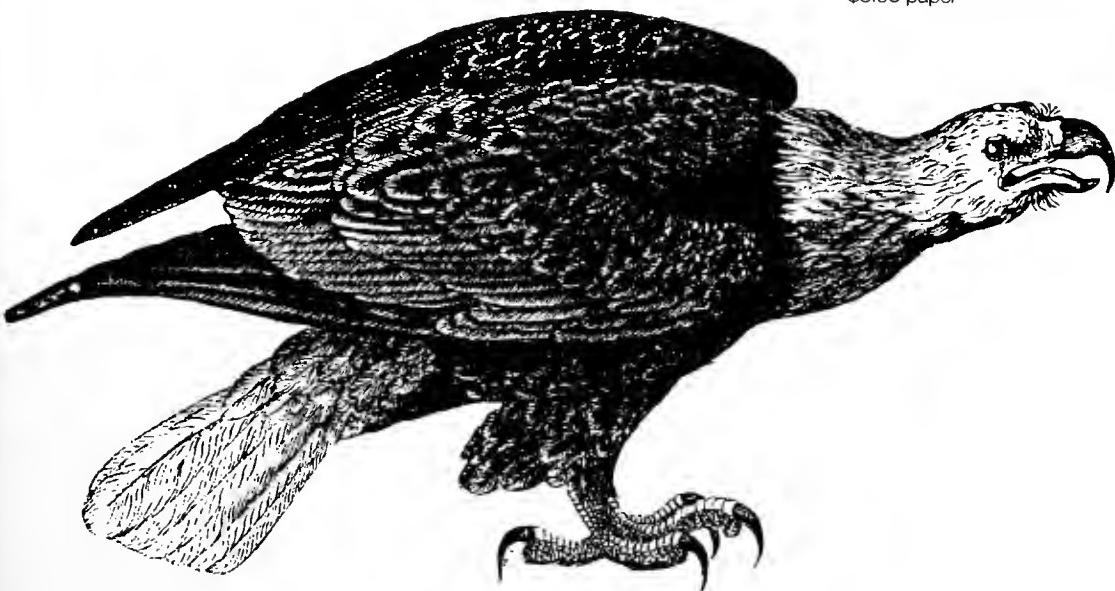
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“N,”



Nevertheless, my four Yellowstone summers gave me a bias in favor of Wyoming. That beautiful country, that kind of life, the wildlife elsewhere and fishing opportunities and social life. Then I came to UW in '36 and got a one year job substituting for one of the professors here and that's when I really got acquainted with Wyoming. I went to England for a year in 1937-38, then came back and learned more and more about Wyoming. I came with training in medieval history and English history and knowing very little about Wyoming. I had to learn that from scratch. They took me back after the year in England only on the condition that I would work up one course in Wyoming history. Grace Raymond had that all to herself for many years and she had died when I was here the first year. They hadn't replaced her yet and they wanted someone to keep Wyoming history going. Then I gradually took over. Most of what I know about Wyoming I learned after I came to the campus here at the University.

I assume you are still learning.

Well yes, 'fraid so. (laughter)

What do you think in a nutshell is the story of Wyoming? I think you start out by saying altitude and aridity have something to do with it, at base. Is that right?

That's right. We've always been, even to the present day, the least industrialized state. Have fewer people employed in manufacturing than any other state. It's always been sparsely settled and probably will continue to be sparsely settled because of the relatively poor soil. Early in the twentieth century farmers flocked into Colorado, the Dakotas and Montana. Likewise, surrounding states, except for Nebraska, have had much richer deposits of precious metals. In smaller numbers they came late to Wyoming. God knows, prospectors poured an awful lot of sweat over the mountains of Wyoming looking for gold, but except for a couple of summers in South Pass, there was really no rush into Wyoming like these other states had. That has held us back. We didn't get that start. And oil, well, we found that early. Markets were unavailable so until World War I that didn't develop. There was some development and then it lapsed afterwards because Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana, Illinois, those places, they could supply all the oil needed. The circumstances were just not favorable for rapid population growth in Wyoming. The jobs just haven't been here.

We've always had the tag of being a colonial state, though, right?

That goes back to the eighteenth century when advanced states felt they had to have colonies where they could get raw materials and unload excess factory products. We've been treated as a colony pretty much although there is argument about whether Wyoming is still a colony, but basically there's no question that we have been dominated more than most states by outside forces. Partly because of our small population. We are last among the states in population. Not so many years ago we were ahead of Vermont, Nevada and Alaska. But that's no longer true. We are to the present day, and we're going to be for the foreseeable future, dominated by international developments, by national developments, by big corporations doing things when the recession comes along, or depression or whatever you want to call it. The corporations cut down their activities. What did they do? They pulled people out of Casper; they put them in Denver ...and the government even pulls people out of here and concentrates them elsewhere. It's been true for Wyoming and it'll continue to be true that we're going to be dominated by outside. Wars have influenced us more than anything else. The ups and downs alone. This past century's been a century of great wars: World War I, World War II, Vietnam, Korean War and the Gulf War -all of them have had great influence on Wyoming but none left us with significant industrialization.

As you mentioned in your book, the fur trappers came here, got their furs. That industry dried up. Immigrants came through on the trails. They didn't want anything; they just came through.

They got something of a false impression because in the years of the greatest rush, at least, the grass was eaten off for ten miles around and they just didn't see the prospect of making a living here. They'd heard about the possibilities farther west and they had an exaggerated notion of what they were going to find on the West Coast. So they started out with no intention of stopping in Wyoming and they saw very little in Wyoming to persuade them to stay.

The cattleman saw the opportunity in the grass. They, in effect, exported the grass through cattle.

The cattle industry is not one that wants a lot of people around. People and cattle don't mix, it is often said. So that's not an industry that will attract people or a very large number of settlers.

The oil industry and coal industry both extract things from the ground. I guess my point is that the fur trapper, the cattleman, the oil and the coal producer, all extracted things from Wyoming somehow or another. I'm wondering if you see an end to that somewhere down the road. Will we always be a state that people take things out of?

Well, it's hard to predict. One thing we do know almost certainly is that there are going to be changes and many of them you cannot predict. If we look at the things that happened in the world and in the United States this century —more industrialization, more new ideas, more things happen, more productivity, tremendous improvements in health and medical care, scientific and technological development— more of these things happened in this one century than in all previous history. It's staggering! Mindboggling!

These things have really developed elsewhere, practically all of them, and we were affected by them. But think of the changes in communication, manufacturing and agriculture. When I was born and grew up the assumption was, I was going to be a farmer. Most people became farmers in that period. Now maybe only three per cent of the people in the country live on farms and ranches. In 1910 when I was born most of the people did. Tremendous change! All the development in agriculture made that possible. The hybrid corn, chemical fertilizers, great machines, no-till and all the other scientific developments. Think of the changes in manufacturing and the development of petrochemicals, the new inventions: television, radio, the automobile, the airplane, computer and all sorts gadgets like the zipper, velcro, ballpoint pen.

The changes in education. How relatively few people went to college when I was a boy. The lengthened life of people, the medical wonders, it's just incredible. Communication, they talk about the Information Age. We've got one hundred times as much information gathered all over the world stacked up far more than anybody can hope to use. There used to be a few "universal men" back in the sixteenth century who could comprehend all knowledge there was or at least have some conception about it. Now we can't hope to master one discipline, let alone the many related disciplines. Computers and various offshoots, space travel. Who would think we would send someone to the moon when I was a boy? When you project twentieth century achievements into the next century, who can sensibly speculate about what we're going to see? We can accept as a fact, however, that there's going to be tremendous changes. Not all of them for the good. I just talked about some of the things that generally are regarded as progress. But some things that have come along since I was a boy have caused many of us to lose our confidence in progress and the idea of progress. Perfectibility and that sort of thing, things are getting better and better. A lot of this is not only because of the current recession —call it depression if you will—but because of what's happened to the family and morality and crime and so forth. The AIDS business. And who would have thought when I went to college and came to the University of Wyoming we'd by now have coed dormitories? Much more sexual freedom.

Do you think that's bad or good?

Well I think some of the consequences are bad! It's apparently inevitable. I don't even know there's much point to even deplore it. No, I think there's a lot to be said for family life. Half the people that get married get divorced. A lot of people wreck their prospects by premarital sex. Young men become fathers and have to drop out of school. This single mothers business is not good. No, I think postponing sex is a better way to handle it, was a better way to handle it.

I don't mean to be critical, but don't you think as a person gets older he tends to feel —throughout history—that there's a breakdown in morality? Didn't the Romans use to feel that?

Well it's true. I used to apologize whenever I started getting pessimistic. I would say people of my age tend to say things have gone to the dogs. Some of the older people said so when I was a boy. But a lot of things have happened since then. Families, for example, held together better in those days. There was more family life. On the farms the family worked together, for example. More people are living in cities now. Youngsters running around at nights, there wasn't so much of that. You were out on the farm; kids were all working and so on. They went to bed early so they

weren't introduced to a lot of temptations.

Some people believe that there ought to be computers in every home, that we ought to have more educational channels, that technology is going to bring the family back together in the living room.

No, I think everything is tending the other way. In the earlier period everybody pitched in and worked on a farm. But in the middle years of this century, and certainly since that time, we've reached the point in our economic and political development that you have to have more than one moneymaker in the family, so that all the women have to go to work. Most of the women are working now and generally don't get much pay. There's a lot of minimum wage stuff and this brings tension in the families.

There are a lot of latchkey kids, as they say, that are on the loose after school so they're not getting the family assistance that they need, and direction. I think conditions are worse in that respect than they have been in the past. I'll grant you that in every generation since earliest time some of the elders didn't like some of the changes that they had seen, but change has come on so fast, particularly in family life, the questions of morality and sexual freedom and all that.

When you chronicle the history of the women's movement, don't you see that some of those things —working outside the home, needing day care, needing some of these things— you as a progressive Democrat would support in any case? Don't you see that those things are inevitable?

T.A., 1950



T.A. Larson Collection

Well, no, women wanted to have influence in politics and the vote and so on, and they wanted the opportunity to work outside the home —for those that were so disposed— so that some of them did get jobs. But they also were concerned about protecting single women and improving their opportunities. When I was a boy we had our "old maids," and a woman who didn't get married by the time she was twenty five, people thought she was in an awful position. And in a sense, she was. She was certainly discriminated against and looked down upon, and I think that's one of the big improvements we've had, the opportunity for single women to remain single without scorn.

What you're saying you would like to see maintained is the family unit, the traditional family unit.

That's right.

You make some predictions here in this book (*Wyoming: A Bicentennial History*). You say —this is page 183 in the epilogue— "Wyoming still has its dreams not only in the past, but in the future and these hopes and visions are now threatened by forces not always under the control of the people of Wyoming." So you think that the population is going to increase, is that what that means?

Well, this was at the beginning of the boom in the late '70s, you see, and it got worse in the early years of the eighties. Speculation ran wild. There were at that time many predictions, some of them extreme, about all the things that were going to happen. Because with the apparent shortage of fuel and the price of oil going up to forty dollars a barrel, that put such a value on our coal and oil and natural gas some prophets predicted that we were going to have a dozen gasification and liquefaction plants, plus oil shale development. If we were going to have all these plants we were going to see lots of new faces.

You say "the land no one wanted for centuries is coveted by hosts of outsiders."

Well we were at that time. The way things worked out and the Arabs and other OPEC nations, the way they raised and then dropped the price of oil, they pulled the plug on a lot of that. The U.S. was partly responsible for the boom part of it. If we could have regulated a little better, could have had a little more influence in the pricing system and not OPEC —the oil producing, exporting countries— if we could have been more effective in dealing with them, maybe had a wiser

energy policy, maybe had a ten dollar-a-barrel import duty or something, we might have been able to avoid that great boom and bust which was destructive.

So this boom and bust we all talk about in Wyoming is not inevitable?

No it isn't. In fact we've had small booms and busts in the past. This was the worst one we've ever had. Casper had locally some booms and busts, but statewide this was certainly the biggest boom and bust situation we've ever had. We've had more bad years than good and the booms have been very rare in Wyoming.

Would you say that Wyoming is now, in terms of its history, finally ready for another woman governor?

I think we are. Thyra Thompson, a very capable secretary of state, wanted to run two or three times but with her children to consider she never could quite get up the courage to run. I think we're getting a little more egalitarian in that respect. I think women are getting more influential in the state and we're breaking down discrimination against women.

What about the cattlemen? We still have a lot of cattlemen.

No, we don't have a lot of cattlemen. Not more than one person in twelve lives on farm and ranch, of the people in Wyoming today.

Isn't their influence ....

Well, in some political matters such as taxation they see eye to eye with most of the business people in town. One reason why we've had the great influence of ranchers in the legislature is the fact that they started early. They recognized the importance of government and getting their hand into government, and it gave them an opportunity to go to the legislature and have a good winter vacation, so to speak. Get some hired help to take care of the ranch, take the family down there. They did that sometimes. They got in the habit whereas lawyers and business people generally couldn't spare forty days when the pay was so low. The stockmen continued term after term and got control of committees. They've had more influence in the legislature than their numbers warrant and they've done it partly by coming to an understanding with the influential Republicans in the towns, and establishing continuity and long service.

If (Kathy) Karpan is elected you would have four lawyers in a row. We used to have a lot of cattlemen and bankers. Does this mean we've become a litigious society?

Well it certainly is a litigious society, but the level of competence might be beyond many ranchers. Now Cliff Hansen worked out well as a governor, actually. But he was broad-minded. He even asserted that the way to go about the budgeting was to find out what we really want in our society and then find the money to do it (laughter). That's not the average approach of ranchers. Nels Smith didn't do the ranchers any good because he got off on some tangents. He was a pretty weak governor. That is not the present Nels Smith, grandson of the governor ...he's a very able person. The background of the average rancher is not the best training for running a complex society such as we have. When we were more agricultural than we are now, why, they were a little better qualified for it. I think that city people are going to be a little more discriminating in advancing ranchers to governorships in the future.

Do you think there's any reason in the world why a competent woman couldn't handle the position of governor?

I can't think of what it would be. We've had some capable female governors in other states. For example, Nebraska. I do think probably we'd be wise to adopt Nebraska's unicameral legislature. There's serious weaknesses about the way our bicameral legislature works. We got locked into that notion from way back. They don't do it that way in Europe. In England they've got a bicameral, all right, but one house has got the control, the House of Commons.

I always thought that Malcolm Wallop would've been better in the House of Lords than he is in the Senate.

The voters misread him. He'd gone along with some of the more liberal legislation in Cheyenne, and people got the notion that he was a preservationist, and that he was a good deal more liberal in development and preserving the wilderness and wildlife and things like that. He's turned

out to be "anti" many of those things.

Well someday someone's going to read the transcript of this or listen to the tape and they're going to say: "There's a couple of liberal Democrats for you."

I don't know. Most of the the leading nations of the world, advanced nations, are socialistic really. There's a lot of socialism all through Europe.

Democratic candidates for the presidency mentioned universal, government-supported health care.

That's a Democratic principle. I like the Canadian system myself from what I've seen of it, especially the one-payer element. We've got to do something about the thirty to forty million people who have no health insurance. We've got to do something about all the tests. We've got to do something about the malpractice business. We've got to reduce the tremendous amount of research and money into keeping people alive forever when they'd be better off dead. I'm not for euthanasia, but I'm certainly strong for the right of people to say: "I've had enough, let's end it!" Living wills as they call them, and some of the associated principles, people deciding that they don't want artificial aids —food and water— limiting those as things that have to be given. I've seen people die that way, too. Couple of my good friends decided they didn't want to be kept alive. They can keep people alive for years and years if they just feed them intravenously and give them water and nourishment. Too much money's being spent on the elderly. It's giving them a life that isn't worth much. We've got to take better care, concentrate more on prevention and taking care of the children.

Take a wild guess, Dr. Larson, and tell me what you think the population will be at this time towards the end of the twenty first century in Wyoming.

Well, for one thing I look for nuclear fusion to be controlled and that will provide unlimited energy. That will shake up the whole world. Thirty, forty years ago I was told by people whose opinion I respected that by now we would be able to take a handful of material that would provide an automobile to run a year. The amount of energy that's available if you could manage fusion as opposed to fission, which we have controlled now pretty much. The hydrogen atom ...enough energy in that if you could just fuse like amounts of what the sun is providing. Boy, it'll shake up the whole world! Maybe by that time we'll be able to save what little oil we've got left for lubrication. We're terribly wasteful in our use of petroleum because it's so much more valuable in some petrochemicals and for lubrication. And temporarily we've got almost a surplus of coal and natural gas, but that's not going to continue. We need to conserve some of those things. Alternatives would be controlling the sun, using more energy directly from the sun, and wind energy. Population growth will depend on that energy problem. Water is, of course, one limiting fact and there's nothing we can do about water unless we desalt the oceans. And if we get enough energy we could pipe water back to Wyoming and irrigate more of our land. In short, if we had unlimited energy through nuclear fusion, why, all sorts of things are possible.

We could, maybe, as some of the environmentalists are saying, stop "taking out" of this state and just have the state for what you described in your last chapter: a wide open area, an expanse of psychological and physical freedom.

That's right. And the attitude towards population. You know, we've had a great improvement in comforts. This consumer-driven society has always bothered me, growing up in the Depression as I did. There's so much waste. Our opportunities to spread the wealth, so to speak, among the people who are so desperately poor, and level it off for the billionaires ...we doubled the number of billionaires in the past ten years. We're going to have to have more leveling of the amenities. It's incredible how many luxuries have become necessities in this past century. What I started to say is that as people improve their standard of living they tend to have fewer children. It's the poorer people who have most of the children now. If people want to improve their standard of living and don't want to be responsible for educating ten children, there is a tendency to hold down population. Otherwise world population grows too fast.

It just seems to me that maybe we in Wyoming, with an actual

decrease in the population in the last five to ten years or so, are not seeing things as they really are. We're not affected quite the same way as people in some of those big cities are.

Of course we're not. The changes in our big cities, southern California and Florida are just mind-boggling. I have a niece who's teaching in Long Beach in Orange County, which used to be a rich persons' community, but a lot of the immigrants are taking over. Twenty years ago she had a fine class, hardworking kids, all Anglos. Now she's got five or six different nationalities -- Cambodians, Vietnamese, the Hispanics, the Blacks, four or five of each, and it's almost bedlam. I have another friend, Phi Beta Kappa, she's teaching kindergarten. She has to teach Mexican immigrants in Spanish. I think it's great for Anglos to be able to use Spanish in order to deal with Spanish people, but I think it's most important for the Hispanics to learn English as fast as possible and use that as their common language in this country. This business --and it's happening in Russia now-- of breaking up into national and ethnic groups is going backward.

I'm a believer in assimilation if possible, and maybe intermarriage is the only answer. I got the wild notion one time that one way you can solve nationalistic and racial problems is to adopt international laws. The United Nations, given enough influence, could require that you cannot marry anybody of your own race

(laughter). I don't know how else we're gonna solve all these ethnic, racial and nationalistic problems.

The reason I find it difficult to feel confident at all about population projections for Wyoming is the many recent technological and scientific breakthroughs, and the possibility of nuclear fusion. When you think of all the changes that have taken place in this one century and possible breakthroughs that could come at any time, population projections are no more than guesswork.

Dr. Larson, I'd like you to talk just a little bit about your writing... it seems to me that you've got a romantic bent or a romantic streak in your writing and it seems to be maybe a little frustrated by the kind of writing that you're having to do. You were told early on by this professor that if you wanted to be in journalism maybe you should take history first, that you could always get into journalism later. I'm wondering if you didn't have a notion to write a little bit different type of material in your life than history?

Well I was influenced by Halliburton's book, *The Royal Road To Romance*. Halliburton worked his way around the world in the 1920's and published this book. He was an odd fellow. I discovered recently that he was gay but that is really irrelevant. He was a single person, at any rate, worked his way around the world and described his experiences. He did this in the twenties when it was possible to do it. When I got out of college in 1936 that was impossible! The year I spent in England I had to show them I had enough money to take care of myself, and guarantee I wouldn't take any work in England. I had to report to the police every month to make sure that I wasn't working for pay. The whole situation had changed. Before the Great Depression a young man could work his way around the world and write romantic stories, and that's one reason why journalism appealed to me. But at the University of Colorado, freshmen who declared an interest in journalism were given a general, liberal arts advisor. I'd already decided not to be a journalist by the end of that year so I never met anyone in the journalism department. But you're right. That romantic side of journalism appealed to me. You'll have to read *The Royal Road To Romance*

(laughter).

Do you think that your decision to go into the writing of history had something to do with your practical farm background?

No. Counselors are tremendously important in high school and college. If you have a wise counselor who can steer you in an appropriate direction quite early, you are lucky. I notice in



college that the students who are motivated really get ahead and do good work. On the other hand, it's more important to begin with a basic liberal arts education which will stand you in good stead whatever your eventual major is. So many people are finding they can't get into what they prepared themselves for. They must be flexible, adaptable.

Did you feel frustrated when you were writing history that you had to write in a historical vein rather than a free-flowing, romantic vein?

No. I used to try to write humorous essays when I was writing for the *Literary Magazine* in Boulder. I never got into fiction very much although I sometimes have dreams and think, when I wake up, "My gosh, that'd make a good story. I ought to write that up" but never do.

How about poetry?

I used to write verse in high school but that's as far as it went, rhymes. My good friend, Professor Wilson Clough, said that there are poets, poetasters and rhymers. Some people can only make rhymes. Others (poetasters) try to write poetry but don't succeed. Then there are rare, real poets. There are a lot of writers in the world who think they're poets but really aren't by his standards.

What about Wilson Clough? Do you think he was?

Some of his efforts reached that level.

I'm going to put you on the spot here, but I'm saying that in your Bicentennial history of Wyoming—which to me is very readable, very interesting, very succinct—you had to write in a way in which you probably would have written best, rather than the way you wrote for the other book (*History of Wyoming*) which is very detailed and very precise.

You may be right. Many of the reviews of the small book were flattering but so were the reviews of the large book. Most of the other authors couldn't identify such unique themes as I did. Take the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas and Iowa, for example. It's hard for me to see how they could find themes as appealing as the ones available to me in Wyoming. Also, my large book is more than three times as large as the small one, had many more details, dates, names. I did not have to cover everything in the small book. I could hit the high spots, so to speak.

Did you ever get any feedback as to how good yours was compared to some of the others?

Well I have had some feedback in the way it has sold, the way it has continued to sell. It has gone through five printings. Probably it's one of the best sellers among the 51 books in the series.

When you write, is there a combination of things working? You go to the files, go to the research material, go to the publications and the newspapers, and gather material. You work, it seems to me, inductively. But on the other hand, this Norton book has so much intuitive thinking in it.

That's because by the 1970s I had pretty fair knowledge of Wyoming history. I started out by going through newspapers trying to find out what bothered people at different periods. Because some things that were important in certain periods were never put down in the books that were available to me. To get a feel of the territory and state I did a lot of hard, grinding work and it hurt my style in a way, I think. Because when you deal in a lot of the things written about Wyoming, the choices of words are not good and you get into bad habits. You get too colloquial on some of these things. As far as literary level is concerned, I think I wrote better in the first years out of college, during the Ph.D. years and afterward. When many of your sources are not well written by literary standards, why, you're apt to lapse into dullness and slang in your own writing.

You almost have to read stuff that is literary to keep that crispness or that freshness.





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That's right. Well, at any rate, you have to deal with the deck that's dealt you.

When you look at the *History of Wyoming* book and this Norton Bicentennial book, do you see them as one of your most important accomplishments, the development of Wyoming history?

Oh, certainly. My World War II history was a good book and that was a real contribution. But World War II lost interest for a lot of people by the '50s when that book came out and we were in the Korean War then. There's more interest now in World War II than when that book was published in 1954.

I think you're the first true historian that Wyoming's seen.

It is true that really highly-trained people were not writing Wyoming history. There were some well-trained people like Fred Nussbaum in European history and Laura White in American History, but they didn't go to work on Wyoming history. State history has never had the rank, really, that national history has had, and one reason is that it isn't so critically evaluated. People in other states are not well qualified to judge it. And to get at a really high level you need more people working in the field because they criticize each other and get information from each other which they can incorporate. If you had to do as I had to do, dig it out myself, you're not going to have the quality, really.

But there is no so-called "Father of Wyoming history" or "Mother of Wyoming history" is there? I mean before your time, at least.

Grace Raymond Hebard, in a sense, and she really had no historical training. She went to the University of Iowa and was trained as a draftswoman. Got a bachelor's degree in engineering, then worked in the Territorial Engineer's office, Elwood Mead's office. Then got to be Secretary of the Board of Trustees at the University of Wyoming. Carey got her that job, Joseph M. Carey. Then she was practically running the University for awhile because the trustees, some of them, didn't come regularly to meetings. There was an Albany County rancher who was President of the Board of Trustees and he let her run the shop between board meetings. So she had a lot of influence around here and got to be the librarian —not many books to deal with—and when they finally pushed her out of her job as secretary, why, then she became the head of the Political Economy Department. It was a combination of political science, economics and whatnot, and she started writing Wyoming history. She had no rigorous training in historical method and she'd decide what she wanted to prove, then set out to prove it. She would throw out stuff that didn't fit her premise. No, she was no historian in that sense.

Do you think that was true of some of the other states, too? That maybe some of the first people to try to capsulize their state's progress weren't real historians either?

Oh, certainly that's true.

I am curious as to how you feel about the development of the American Studies Program, how you developed it.

Laura White in history and Wilson Clough in English, around 1940, developed a combination major in American History and American Literature. A natural combination, they work well together. Wilson Clough was a key figure because he'd published a book on the origins of the U.S. Constitution. He went to Greek, English and French sources which Jefferson and Madison and Hamilton had gone to, to find the ideas which they incorporated in the Constitution.

This was one of his better works, too, wasn't it?

Yeah, forget what he called it, but at any rate this book became the cornerstone of our American Studies program. After a while President (George "Duke") Humphrey decided that I had to take the job as director of American Studies even though it wasn't in my line. So I took it on a temporary basis. I got into something I probably shouldn't have because it took me away from what I was more interested in. Eventually I found a way out and the new university president, H.T. Person, gave me the Chair of American Studies. That way I finally was able to get out of an activity that I probably shouldn't have been in, in the first place.

Was Wyoming History woven into the American Studies curriculum?

No. I had a joint responsibility. I was director of American Studies and head of the History

Department at the same time for eight or nine or ten years.

Looking back on it now, would you rather not have had all the administrative responsibility you had?

Yeah, I didn't want all that administrative activity and so on. It held me back on my own research and writing. But I almost got into more. President Humphrey almost made me, I later discovered, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences one time. I'm glad he didn't ask me because I might have accepted. Teachers who become deans really give up their scholarly activity. They have to become administrators which they may or may not be skilled for. And this business of sitting behind a desk quite a bit, and dealing with department heads and all that stuff, and having people come in and complain about the way they're being treated and all that, I don't care for that. And all the paper to be distributed and collected is just not what I was trained to do.

But you did well at it, didn't you?

I don't think I was a particularly good administrator. I got along well with my people.

Isn't that what it takes?

That's part of it, but maybe I wasn't hard enough on some of them and I'm a little too softhearted. It's hard for me to fire somebody, for example. And if you're going to build a department sometimes you just have to be pretty ruthless. As this University has developed, it's publish or perish.

Can you see what's going to happen to the writing of history down the line? Do you have premonitions about what might happen?

Well, it certainly gets mixed more and more with journalism. You have books coming out on Desert Storm and a number of things. It doesn't take long before the interpretations get questioned. The dealings with Russia. The new books out about Gorbachev and about the collapse of communism and so on. Just a year after it happened books were out. And I'm amazed how well they do what they do. It's current history, you might say, but there's a place for that.

You know, since I've been involved in this oral history project, I wonder where I've been in the last twenty years in the study of history. Because it seems when talking to people like you I'm getting firsthand what I used to consider hearsay. I look at these books you have on your shelves. Those were all written by people and they, in turn, got their ideas —those footnotes, those annotated bibliographies— from other people. All the things that we see in these academic works relate to people. And I think to myself, "Why didn't I get a start talking to people like you a lot earlier?" It would have been a great help to me to understand a little bit more holographically or three-dimensionally. It would have helped me understand a little bit more about human nature, about life and about Wyoming. I kick myself for thinking that history was nothing but sitting in my own little ivory tower with a bunch of papers that I'd copied on the Xerox machine from the library. You know what I'm saying?

Yeah. But there are so many sources now, and stuff available, and more government studies and reports, and more things going on in Cheyenne in the various departments, so it gets harder and harder to write a history of Wyoming than it was when I started writing it. ...That's the reason there are going to be revisions.

I think you used your intuition a lot in history. Even when I read the big thick volume, I see insights coming out of you. Maybe that was due to your upbringing on the farm in Nebraska, and maybe it was due to your graduate studies, and maybe it just was training over the years... but I know that you have insights. I think, after having interviewed people, I have neglected the underside of history. You can use statistics any way you want to. But I'm getting some stuff now that gives me a lot more information on motivations that somehow or other get deleted or subtracted... I'm not making myself too clear.

I understand what you're saying. I've run into the same problems. I've had to revise some of



the conclusions in my big *History of Wyoming*. Didn't get adequately into the records in Congress. I talk about some of these congressmen and senators but don't cover them adequately. Their records weren't available, and there were no monographs about them. Maybe I depended too much on newspaper stories and the *Congressional Record* about what they did instead of getting into their files. I think that right now there's such an explosion of information and so much of it's stacked up in computers and on films and tapes —information about every place in the known world—that we're just flooded with source material and it makes it really difficult to do a top job except on a very narrow subject.

There's a two-volume work on the Union Pacific, for example, by Maury Klein. I just went through those. It's laborious because each volume has 600 pages in it. There's a lot of stuff in there that had never before been available because the U.P. sat on its records. So that everything that has been written on the Union Pacific was pretty flimsy because they didn't have the inside story from the railroad's point of view. But Klein brings out a lot of that. He talks about a lot of individuals, their relations with other railroads. He brings in the things that you wouldn't even dream existed.

If you could do it over again, would you still depend on the papers a lot?

I would even now have to go at some of that. Certainly I would have many more monographs, and many more studies and a lot more government records. More of the records are being kept now in Cheyenne. In those days governors would take their papers with them or destroy them, so there wasn't much to deal with. A college prof out in California in the *San Francisco Chronicle* had the nerve to write, "This is probably the best state history ever written." Well, I think, looking back on it, I had a simpler story to tell. Not nearly so many people, not nearly so many things happened in Wyoming. You take a state like California with all the details you have to get into and the longer history ...it's easy for me to put in one book the principal themes in Wyoming history.

If you could go back, though, knowing what you know now, would you attack everything the same way —go to the newspapers—or would you go more to the heads of government?

Well, I know that now there's been so much more written on Wyoming, the different aspects of it. But I could probably avoid going to the papers. You're involved in reading film, and the film is pretty bad for some of these papers, too. It's hard on the eyes and all that. I wouldn't do as much of that as I had to do at that time cause a lot more articles have been written about specialized topics in Wyoming history. I've written some myself.

Among the subjects mentioned in your *Annals* article you would like to see explored: minerals, water, our relationship to Denver.

That gets into the outside influence. We have been locked to these cities outside of Wyoming. We're tied to Denver, Salt Lake City, Rapid City and Billings and so on. We should study how this affects different parts of the state. There's a story there that hasn't been developed.

All right, (say) you're a historian, you're 21 years old—what would you get into?

I probably wouldn't get into state history at all. For one thing, it limits you as far as jobs are concerned. I had to think about that rather carefully because after concentrating so long on Wyoming history, no one would ever hire me in some other state. Because I have little I can transfer.

Are you saying you regret...

No, I don't, because it's worked out very well for me. But at U.W. we hired one person after another here to take over my Wyoming history when I was getting ready to retire and every one of them wound up slighting Wyoming for that reason. They become environmentalists or they became Indian historians. That was what they were going to become expert at. However, we've got a chap now, Phil Roberts, who's done quite a bit on Wyoming history and probably he'll be locked in the way I am. But he's satisfied doing that. There's a good job here and he is already appreciated. And they've appreciated what I've done. Probably I prospered and succeeded here better than I could anywhere else.

Do you think the people of Wyoming appreciate Wyoming history?

A lot of them do, yeah.

Do a lot of them claim that your class was their most interesting class?

I don't know, I think I made it interesting to a lot of them.

I think I'm talking to the person who knows more about Wyoming history than any living human being, and I'm happy and proud to say that. Not to say that there might not be somebody in the wings like Phil Roberts who will develop Wyoming history a little further, take it a little further down the road, but....

He certainly has that opportunity because for one thing, when I started out, for many years we taught twice as many hours and many more students, bigger classes.

How many hours did you have to teach?

Twelve for awhile and then cut back to nine, then back to six when I had all these administrative chores. But now six is the standard for most professors, teaching two courses. I started out with four preparations ...can't do a first class job of teaching and you certainly can't find much time for research except weekends. I had to work nights and weekends and neglect my family as you do yours, probably, to get some of these other things done. But a person now, once he gets organized, is going to have more time and more recognition for research and writing.

You say in your Bicentennial history you taught something like...

Over 16,000 students.

What do you think about that?

It's too darn many. I sometimes said that I probably didn't give them any more than someone that taught one fourth as much because he could give each one more, and had more individual contact with students, and could spend more time with each student.

Do you ever get any feedback from these people? Do they ever come back and tell you what they thought about the course?

Well, yeah. Some of them do. You have to take that with a grain of salt because they tend to over-praise.

Looking at your career in the university system, in the legislature, and as a lobbyist for the American Association of Retired Persons, what do you think your most important work is? What do you think your legacy is?

It would have to be in the field of Wyoming history and in teaching. And that ties in with writing because the writing helped my teaching. No, I think it's in the dissemination of the knowledge about Wyoming history, and getting people interested in that, and respecting their history, and trying to get them to be more critical, to ask questions and to not just accept what a book says about something or other. That's where Hebard got into trouble, really, in the long run. She put it out as gospel and if you teach it to kids at their mother's knees, the kids grow up with only that. They cling to myths because they've known them so long and can't believe that they're not true.

You're what religion?

People don't talk about their religion or too much about their politics, but I'm like Wilson Clough. I'm an agnostic. And I have been ever since I was eighteen years old. I think, frankly, that most of the people in this country are agnostics, but their wives have religious connections or something and they give it lip service, pretend to be religious, but I suspect most of them are agnostics.

What were you raised?

I was brought up in the Swedish Mission Covenant Church. It is a small, fundamentalist offshoot of the state church in Sweden, which is Lutheran.

Was your dad a true believer?

No, he didn't go to church very often, but he'd send us to church. So I went through Bible classes for kids and listened to fire and brimstone sermons in the Swedish language. But I couldn't accept the heaven and hell philosophy.

Well you've got, let's say, another twenty years.

Oh, no, no, no. For a person of 82 I'm given six years, probably.

You're healthy now, aren't you?

Pretty healthy. But my lungs have never been in good shape. That's one reason I went West to college. I've had chronic bronchitis ever since I had pneumonia twice as a boy. I never publicized it, but it certainly has handicapped me in various ways. The high, dry climate in the West helped me. It's a possibility that I could get emphysema down the road.

How old was your dad when he died?

He was only seventy.

So you have good genes from your mother's side, at least.

Well, my mother died of influenza at age 39. Many of the strongest died of that Spanish Flu in 1918, which killed more people in two months than were killed by World War I. The Spanish Flu turned into pneumonia. Now pneumonia is not the awful killer it was, but it was before we had flu and pneumonia shots and penicillin and antibiotics.

Have you gotten into your genealogy much at all?

Not very much, no I haven't.

That sort of thing doesn't interest you?

No, I'm not interested in that. My ancestors were Swedish peasants pretty much. Land was pretty limited in Sweden, for example, and they were poor people. My father dropped out of school and came over here, as did my mother separately. She worked as a maid in Omaha. My father, who was a hired man and renter, acquired land and prospered, then lost everything he had in the Great Depression because he bought too much land. He retired and moved to town at the age of 45 and had a couple of farms. He had feed cattle and was going to supervise renters or sharecroppers on his land, and continue to run the cattle feeding operation. But he was foolish to buy too much land ...they told farmers in World War I that land was limited and population was growing. Economists all said land was the best investment. Well, that certainly proved false in World War I. Everybody mortgaged his land to buy more land and three-fourths of them went broke eventually.

I'm wondering what you think this state's going to look like one hundred years from now?

I think we're not going to be a heavily-populated place. I would hope we value what assets we have, our unique aspects. I hope that we put a high enough value on our wildlife, our mountain scenery, our wide open spaces, our parks, our trails, our historic forts and things like that, and our forests and what water we have, that we will treasure them and preserve them and give opportunities for a limited number of people to enjoy them. Because the way things are going, most of the country's going to be so crowded that the multitudes will relish an opportunity to see our rare treasures. Our problem, on the other hand, is that this tourism is sort of a fragile thing. It can be overdone very easily and we can't stand too many people without losing it. I'm reminded of the fabled dog that stood on the bridge with a bone in his mouth, and looks in the water and sees his shadow and drops the bone grabbing for the image. You know, you push this tourism too hard, too fast ...it's not a perfect economic development in some respects. For one thing it's so seasonal, and in the second place there are so many poorly paid jobs in the tourism business. You can't build a first-rate society on a lot of seasonal minimum wage jobs.

Nevertheless a lot of boomers and Main Streeters are going to be attacking you and saying....

Sure, I think they will be. But there are a lot of people who live in Wyoming who have turned down opportunities to go elsewhere. They like it the way it is. They think Wyoming is a delightful, uncrowded commonwealth, so to speak. No, there's bound to be conflict between the boosters and the knockers. There have got to be a few knockers to keep the boomers honest on these things because they want to bring in things that are not going to be worthwhile in the long run. They want to make a quick buck and make their money and get out. Many of them are of that inclination. I foresee an opportunity for a limited number of people to have a good life in Wyoming. But there is a ceiling on that. Even if we wind up being the only place in the country that has these wide open

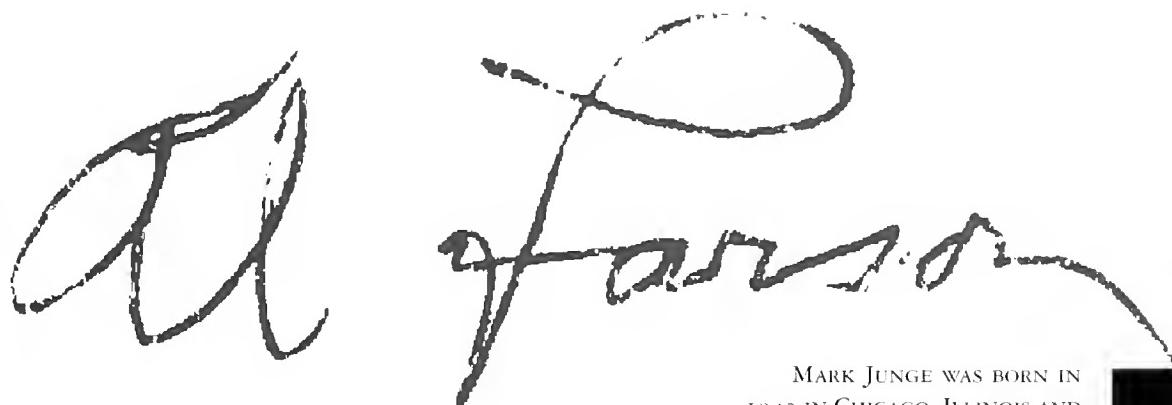
spaces and spectacular scenery, we can't accommodate millions of people.

Do you have confidence in a Wyoming citizen to understand what you are saying?

I think a lot of Wyoming people feel the way I do about this. We have the Powder River Basin people. We have the Sierra Club. We have the Wyoming Outdoor Council. We have various preservation groups and they're getting more and more influential. People who want to maintain our wilderness, people who are interested in buying this ranch from Gerry Spence and Moriarity and want to save it. I think it's a good move starting to charge fees for going into the parks. They're adding five more fee areas this year because we can't provide very good facilities. We ought to have better facilities than we have in our parks. We ought to figure out some way to solve this problem of what people in southeastern Wyoming call the "greenies." We shouldn't just be an overcrowded weekend recreation area for Colorado to come up here with their trailers and groceries, not spending their money here, really --fill up with gasoline in Colorado and come up here and enjoy their recreation in the Medicine Bow Range and so on. Utah, Idaho and Montana exploit northwestern Wyoming the same way. If we're going to have a decent society in Wyoming we cannot accept unlimited tourism of that kind. We've got to control it some way and I don't know what the solution is.

This has been great, Dr. Larson; I've enjoyed it.

I don't know whether you've got much that you can use.

A large, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T.A. Larson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "T.A." on top and "Larson" below it.

MARK JUNGE WAS BORN IN 1943 IN CHICAGO, ILLINOIS AND RAISED IN DENVER, COLORADO. HE AND HIS WIFE ARDATH CAME TO WYOMING IN 1967 WHERE THEY RAISED TWO SONS, ANDY AND DAN. JUNGE EARNED HIS B.A. IN HISTORY AND M.A. IN SOCIAL STUDIES FROM WESTERN STATE COLLEGE (B.A.,M.A.) IN GUNNISON, COLORADO AND COMPLETED TWO YEARS OF POST-GRADUATE WORK IN HISTORY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING. FROM 1971 UNTIL 1992 HE WAS A HISTORIAN FOR THE WYOMING STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE, AND SINCE THAT TIME HAS BEEN THE EDITOR OF *WYOMING Annals*. CURRENTLY JUNGE IS COMPLETING A BOOK ON WYOMING PEOPLE.

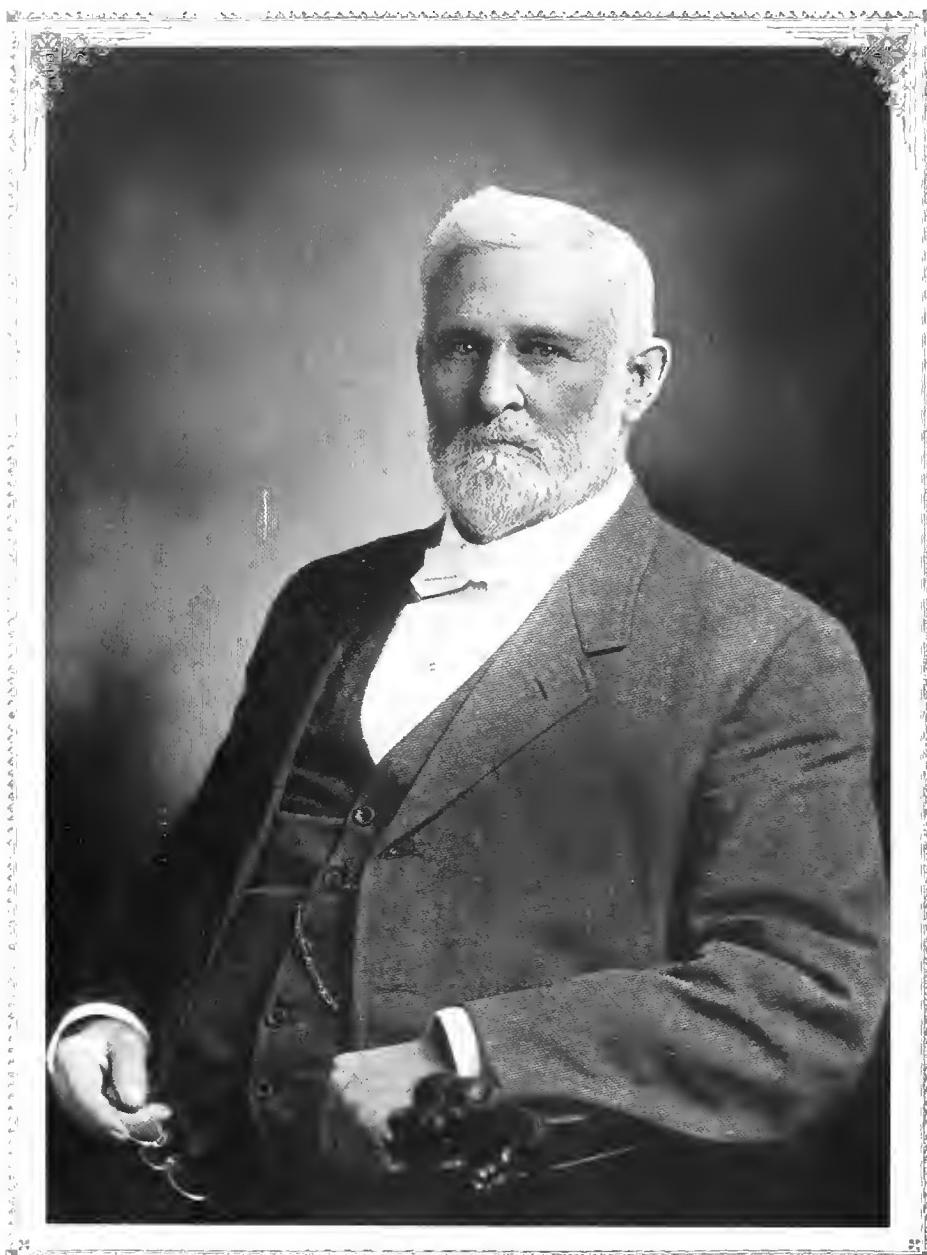


Craig Pindell

All contemporary photos  
of T.A. Larson taken  
by Mark Junge, 1994



# I AM NOT A Cuckoo DEMOCRAT!



## THE CONGRESSIONAL CAREER OF HENRY A. COFFEEN

by Leonard Schlup

**Photo:** from I.S. Bartlett, *History of Wyoming*, Vol. II  
(Chicago: the S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1918), p.151

**H**enry A. Coffeen (1841-1912) was a prominent Wyoming politician, rancher and businessman during the late nineteenth century. Generally ignored by historians who have mentioned his name only briefly in general histories of Wyoming, Coffeen merits attention for the role he played in national politics in the 1890s. He practiced politics and engaged in business matters during a generation of change that transformed the political, economic and social order of the United States, as the country evolved from a rural, agricultural society to one that was urban and industrial.

Coffeen witnessed the growth of the Wyoming Territory and its conversion to statehood. Although he played a role in state-building, helped establish the city of Sheridan and was a pioneering father of the state Democratic party, this article concerns his congressional career. A versatile man, Coffeen remains an enigma largely because of the paucity of personal papers and the tendency of historians to concentrate on the lives of his Republican contemporaries. Letters that do exist, combined with Coffeen's speeches in the *Congressional Record*, reveal several qualities about the Wyoming political figure that deserve recognition. Coffeen's historical importance is tied directly to his public policies and actions, and a great deal of biographical work remains before his influence as a politician can be fully assessed. It is appropriate to begin that work during 1994, the centennial of his bid for re-election to Congress.

Born near Gallipolis, Gallia County, Ohio, Coffeen was a direct descendant of Michael Coffeen, who emigrated in the 1700s from Ireland, and of Captain John Coffeen, who served under General George Washington during the American Revolution and later in the Vermont state legislature. At an early age Henry Coffeen moved with his parents to Indiana and in 1853 to Champaign County, Illinois. After attending local schools and Butler University in Indianapolis, he graduated with a degree in science from Abingdon College, which later consolidated with Eureka College in Illinois. For a short time he engaged in journalism. In 1865 at Roseville, Illinois, Coffeen married Harriet Newell King.<sup>1</sup> They settled in Portage County, Ohio, where Coffeen accepted a faculty appointment in natural science at Western Reserve Eclectic Institute (now Hiram College). While living there and teaching several subjects he formed a lasting friendship with James A. Garfield, a local politician, instructor and president of the college prior to the Civil War and who later became the twentieth president of the United States.<sup>2</sup>

During the 1870s Coffeen participated in a variety of activities. In 1870 after returning to Illinois he prepared and published a 116-page book on the history of Vermilion County where he resided.<sup>3</sup> Eager for change, the restless Coffeen briefly taught general science courses at Eastern Illinois College (Charleston, Illinois), which he helped or-

ganize. Upon leaving academe he assumed the role of lyceum lecturer, traveling extensively to many large American cities. He also wrote essays on religious issues, belonged to the Theosophical Society of Chicago and toured the state as a biblical scholar. Eventually, he settled in Danville, Illinois, and became a businessman.<sup>4</sup>

Coffeen's entry into politics occurred in the 1870s in Illinois. In 1876 he ran for a seat in the United States House of Representatives as the Greenback party candidate. Greenbackers organized in 1874 and nominated James B. Weaver for president in 1880. They believed that the issuance of paper money would bring prosperity, especially to the farmer, by raising prices and making debts easier to pay. Coffeen concurred with this assessment, as did his Bloomington neighbor Congressman Adlai E. Stevenson.<sup>5</sup> Coffeen's unsuccessful Democratic opponent was John Charles Black, a Danville lawyer who secured a presidential appointment as United States Commissioner of Pensions from 1885 to 1887 and served one term in the House from 1893 to 1895.<sup>6</sup> Joseph G. Cannon, the Republican incumbent who later became speaker of the House, scored an easy reelection victory over Coffeen, whose defeat failed to dissuade him from future political activity.<sup>7</sup>

In the late 1870s and early 1880s Coffeen belonged to the Knights of Labor. Founded in 1869 in Philadelphia by tailor Uriah S. Stephens the Knights supported cooperatives, an eight-hour workday and the adoption of a graduated income tax. It grew considerably after Terence V. Powderly became its Grand Master Workman in 1879. Next to Powderly, Coffeen was the highest officer in the labor union for nearly two years.<sup>8</sup>

By the early 1880s western pioneering dominated Coffeen's thoughts. Cognizant of new opportunities for business initiatives and real estate purchases, Coffeen persuaded his family to undertake the long journey west.

1. Three children -Hallie, Mabel and Herbert- were born to the Coffeens. Mrs. Coffeen died in 1901, and in 1904 Mr. Coffeen married Alice Dwight of Denver, Colorado.

2. Francis M. Green, *Hiram College and Western Reserve Eclectic Institute: Fifty Years of History, 1850-1900* (Cleveland: The O. S. Hubbell Printing Company, 1901), pp.30-36; Allan Peskin, *Garfield: A Biography* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1978), pp.50-52; Charles Wilber to James A. Garfield, 24 July, 11 April 1857, *James A. Garfield Papers*, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

3. *Vermilion County, Historical, Statistical, and Descriptive...* (Danville: H. A. Coffeen, 1870).

4. *Wyoming Tribune, Laramie Republican, and Laramie Daily Boomerang*, 10-12 December 1912.

5. Adlai E. Stevenson, Vice President of the United States from 1893 to 1897, was the grandfather of Governor Adlai E. Stevenson II who campaigned for the presidency in 1952 and 1956.

6. Additional information on Black's life can be found in the *John Charles Black Papers*, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield.

7. Coffeen edited a newspaper in Danville as well as *Cosmos*, a Chicago magazine. See *The Sheridan Post*, 10 December 1912; *Danville Commercial*, 8 November 1876; *Danville Daily Times*, 8 November 1876; and David W. Lusk, *Eighty Years of Illinois: Politics and Politicians, Anecdotes and Incidents, A Succinct History of the State, 1809-1889*, 3rd ed. rev. (Springfield: H. W. Rokker, 1889), p.254. Useful material on Illinois Republican politics can be mined from the *Joseph G. Cannon Papers*, Illinois State Historical Library.

Leaving Danville in the family's covered wagon in April, 1884 they made their way west to Wyoming Territory and in September reached Big Horn, nestled at the foot of the Bighorn Mountains in Little Goose Creek Valley. There Coffeen entered the mercantile business, ranching, real estate and gold and silver mining. When the Burlington and Missouri railroad survey crew came through northern Wyoming, Coffeen, an exponent of economic and social progress, quickly recognized the impact the railroad would have in the region.<sup>9</sup>

In 1887 Coffeen relocated five miles north to the railroad town of Sheridan. Through his various business enterprises he assisted in developing that small community. He also worked to make Sheridan the county seat when Sheridan County was formed in 1888. Ultimately he emerged as one of the wealthiest men in northern Wyoming and had a main thoroughfare in Sheridan named for him. His extensive property in Sheridan included the Coffeen Block at the corner of Main and Loucks. He managed the Coffeen Improvement Company, which dealt in real estate, and promoted J. E. West and Company, a wholesale grocery firm. For Coffeen it was an exciting and challenging time to live in a developing territory that was preparing itself for statehood.<sup>10</sup>



Richard Collier, SHPO

In 1889 Governor Francis E. Warren, President Benjamin Harrison's Republican appointee as Wyoming Territorial Governor and a proponent of statehood, arranged a constitutional convention. Because of his prominence in Sheridan, Coffeen won election as a Democratic delegate to the convention, which convened September 2 at Cheyenne.<sup>11</sup> Forty-nine delegates led by Melville C. Brown, president of the convention and a Laramie lawyer, met at the Inter-Ocean Hotel and the new Capitol building to write a constitution for Wyoming statehood. Coffeen, the only representative from Sheridan County, announced that he had instructions from his constituents to oppose statehood and that he was ready to second a motion not to formulate a constitution.<sup>12</sup> Coffeen's statement was not surprising because many Wyoming Democrats preferred to postpone statehood until their party stood a better chance of electing state legislative and executive officials.

Having performed this initial perfunctory obligation, Coffeen took up the serious business of drafting an acceptable constitution. He assumed an active part in the debates and scored points as an effective orator and able spokesman.<sup>13</sup> "I come from a county that is one of the newest in the sisterhood," he declared, "and is in today perhaps as good, if not better, financial condition than any county in the territory."<sup>14</sup> Coffeen worked closely with George W. Baxter, a cattle rancher who served briefly as a Democratic territorial governor in 1886.<sup>15</sup> But not



*To my friend L. L. Langford  
with kind regards Francis E. Warren*

Francis E. Warren

Wyoming State Museum



George Baxter  
1889



A. C. Campbell

Wyoming State Museum

everything ran smoothly for the Sheridan merchant. Coffeen, who endorsed woman suffrage, disagreed with fellow Democrat, A. C. Campbell, a Cheyenne lawyer who wanted the suffrage issue submitted to the voters. Campbell angrily shouted that Coffeen had impugned his intentions over the matter and had maligned his charac-

8. Insights into labor and politics in the Gilded Age can be gleaned from the *Terence V. Powderly Papers*, Department of Archives and Manuscripts, Catholic University of America, Washington, DC.

9. *Casper Star Tribune*, 19 March 1978, 25 March 1979.

10. *Cheyenne State Leader*, 12 December 1912; *The Sheridan Post*, 10 December 1912.

11. *Cheyenne Daily Sun*, 2 September 1889.

12. *Ibid.*, 7 September 1889.

13. For information on the constitutional convention, see *Journal and Debates of the Constitutional Convention of the State of Wyoming* (Cheyenne: The Daily Sun, 1893); Henry J. Peterson, *The Constitutional Convention of Wyoming* (Laramie University of Wyoming, 1940); W. Turrentine Jackson, "The Wyoming Stock Growers Association Political Power in Wyoming Territory, 1873-1890," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXXIII (March 1947): 571-94.

14. Peterson, *The Constitutional Convention of Wyoming*, p.113.

15. George W. Baxter to Grover Cleveland, 11 November 1886, *Grover Cleveland Papers*, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress. Baxter ran unsuccessfully as the Democratic candidate for governor of Wyoming in 1890.

*The Constitutional Convention of Wyoming, 1889.* Coffeen is the white-bearded man second from the right in the second row.



Wyoming State Museum

ter.<sup>16</sup> Coffeen denied the accusations but the episode soured the relationship between the two men and created an animosity that surfaced again in a few years.

The completed constitution, adopted in convention on September 30 and signed by Coffeen, won ratification by the people on November 5. Sheridan was the only county to reject the finished product.<sup>17</sup> The bill for admission passed both houses of Congress and on July 10, 1890, President Harrison signed the legislation admitting Wyoming as the forty-fourth state.

A struggle between small and large cattlemen highlighted Wyoming's first years as a state. Members of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association had virtually turned the state into a cattlemen's commonwealth. In April, 1892, the large cattlemen, lashing out against their as-

sorted enemies with hired gunmen, invaded Johnson County in search of rustlers. They killed two men, Nate Champion and Nick Ray, at Kaycee and continued north toward the town of Buffalo. But they ran into local opposition and were surrounded at the TA Ranch south of town. A U.S. cavalry detachment from nearby Fort McKinney rescued the cattlemen, escorting them to Cheyenne for trial. After nine months the case against them was dismissed for lack of evidence.<sup>18</sup> Coffeen described the invaders as "the ruling gang that sent murderous invasions into our settlements and are still endangering the welfare of our state."<sup>19</sup>

With his background in journalism, business and mining Coffeen accumulated numerous friends in Wyoming. His participation in the constitutional convention had whetted his appetite for politics, and in 1892 he decided to run for the position of Wyoming's sole representative to the Fifty-third Congress. Coffeen challenged Republican Congressman Clarence D. Clark, Evanston lawyer and Uinta County prosecuting attorney who had taken a congressional seat in 1890. At the 1892 state Democratic convention held in Rock Springs seventy-five delegates nominated Rawlins druggist, doctor and sheepman Dr. John E. Osborne as their gubernatorial candidate. They named Cheyenne lawyer Gibson Clark

16. T. A. Larson, *History of Wyoming*, 2nd ed. rev. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), p.245.

17. Homer E. Socolofsky and Allan B. Spetter, *The Presidency of Benjamin Harrison* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1987), p.45.

18. The literature on this subject is plentiful. See, or example, Helena Huntingdon Smith, *The War on Powder River* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966); A. S. Mercer, *The Banditti of the Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954); Mari Sandoz, *The Cattlemen* (New York: Hastings House, 1958), pp.352-59; Oscar H. Flagg, *Review of the Cattle Business in Johnson County Wyoming Since 1892 and the Causes that Led to the Recent Invasion*, reprint of the 1892 ed. (Salem, New Hampshire: Ayer Company, Publishers, 1979); Lewis L. Gould, *Wyoming A Political History, 1868-1896* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), pp.137-58; Richard White, *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own: A History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), pp.344-46; E. S. Osgood, *The Day of the Cattlemen* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1929); Lois Van Valkenburgh, "The Johnson County War: The Papers of Charles Bingham Penrose in the Library of the University of Wyoming," M.A. thesis, (Laramie: University of Wyoming, 1939). For additional insights into this period, see Fanny Kemble Wister, ed., *Owen Wister Out West: His Journals and Letters* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

19. Henry A. Coffeen to Cleveland, *Grover Cleveland Papers*, 25 September 1893,  
20. Gould, *Wyoming*, p.161.

John E. Osborne



Wyoming State Museum



their candidate for justice of the Supreme Court, and they selected Coffeen as the congressional candidate.<sup>20</sup> The Democrats also read out of the party any defenders of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association. Moreover, the party's platform contained a plank that held the Republicans under Governor Amos W. Barber "largely responsible for the fact that a considerable body of armed men were collected without the state and permitted to march into Johnson county in open and armed defiance of the constitution and laws and in resistance to the local civil authorities."<sup>21</sup>

The national outlook appeared favorable for Democrats in 1892. They had captured control of the United States House of Representatives in 1890, and they smelled victory with former President Grover Cleveland as their 1892 presidential standardbearer. The policy of high tariff protectionism, combined with the problem of discontented farmers demanding relief from high mortgages and low farm prices, spelled trouble for the Republicans. The latter were under the docile leadership of President Harrison, an unpopular chief executive who overcame opposition from within his party to win renomination for a second term.

Wyoming Democrats launched their campaign in August, 1892, with speaking tours across the state. The appearance of the Populists, a reform party committed to currency expansion, a graduated income tax, and govern-

ment ownership and operation of all transportation and communication lines, worried Democrats in some southern states. But in Wyoming Populism remained a minor force.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, Democratic leaders concluded that voters belonging to Wyoming's Populist Party might be sufficient to guarantee a Democratic victory on the state level while depriving Harrison of the state's three electoral votes. The Democratic National Committee headed by William F. Harrity, a Pennsylvania businessman and banker, instructed Wyoming Democratic Party Chairman A. L. New to propose fusion to the People's Party at the Democratic convention in Douglas in September.<sup>23</sup> The Populists consented to the arrangement and the name of the Populist presidential nominee James B. Weaver replaced Cleveland on the ballot. Accordingly, Wyoming Populists supported Coffeen for Congress in a contest in which the Johnson County War and free coinage of silver were the main issues. The Democratic-Populist merger pleased Coffeen. "I believe the chance is good," he remarked, "to elect our entire state ticket and redeem Wyoming to democracy where she properly belongs."<sup>24</sup>

In the election of 1892 Coffeen defeated Clarence D. Clark by 461 votes. He won the House seat with 8,855 votes to 8,394 for Clark. Coffeen carried Albany, Converse, Crook, Fremont, Johnson, Natrona, Sheridan and Weston counties, but the margin of victory was slim. He squeaked past Clark by only three votes in Fremont and five votes in Weston. His biggest winning margins occurred in Johnson, Albany and Sheridan counties.<sup>25</sup> Coffeen's success in capturing a seat in the House of Representatives at the age of fifty-one was indeed a satisfying moment in his life. He had earned to some extent the confidence of the Wyoming electorate and he looked for-

21. *Cheyenne State Leader*, 30 July 1892.

22. An excellent account of the third party in Wyoming is Thomas Kreuger, "Populism in Wyoming," M.A. thesis (Laramie: University of Wyoming, 1960). Two prominent Laramie Populists were Henry Breitenstein and Shakespeare E. Sealey.

23. Gould, *Wyoming*, pp. 159-92; Larson, *History of Wyoming*, pp. 284-87; Francis E. Warren to W. F. Sanders, 6 October 1892, *Francis E. Warren Papers*, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie; George L. Miller to William C. Whitney, 7 October 1892, *William C. Whitney Papers*, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

24. Coffeen to George T. Beck, 21 September 1892, *George T. Beck Papers*, American Heritage Center.

25. Marie H. Erwin, *Wyoming Historical Blue Book: A Legal and Political History of Wyoming, 1868-1943* (Denver: Bradford-Robinson Printing Company, 1946), p.1181.

## The Election of 1892



Campaign Buttons & Ribbons  
from the  
Wyoming State Museum

Photography by Craig Pindell



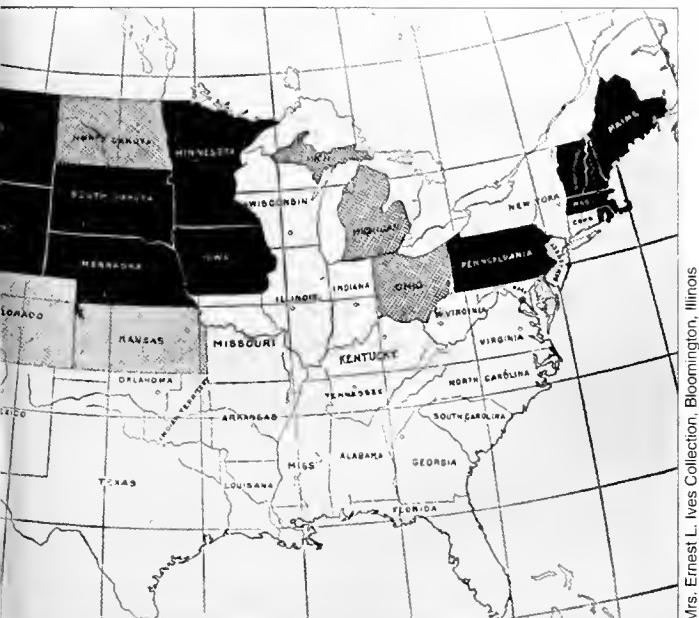
ward to the challenging assignment that awaited him. Yet his exceedingly narrow victory should have forewarned him about the durability of his seat and the necessity for political dexterity to convince a divided electorate that he could most ably represent their interests in Washington.

Other Wyoming Democrats also triumphed at the state level in the election of 1892. Osborne was elected governor with 9,290 votes to 7,509 for Republican Edward A. Ivinston.<sup>26</sup> In his race Osborne received more votes than Coffeen. Although Osborne captured the governorship, Republicans retained control of the Wyoming Senate by a margin of eleven to five. In the House there were sixteen Democrats, twelve Republicans and five Populists, giving Democrats the nod.<sup>27</sup> For Coffeen the biggest disappointment was Harrison's narrow win in Wyoming, as he beat Weaver 8,454 votes to 7,722.<sup>28</sup> Obviously, Democrats did not adhere to their bargain as faithfully as the Populists. Northern Republicans supported Harrison while voting against Ivinston and Clarence Clark.<sup>29</sup> The state Democratic loss, however, was overshadowed by Cleveland's national victory. The stage was set for the Democratic restoration in Washington.

Congressman Coffeen was an unusual political figure and an endearing personality on the Wyoming political stage in the Gilded Age, an era of vituperation and partisanship. He was a local politician who liked people and



Edward Ivinston  
Wyoming State Museum



26. A. W. Jones to John E. Osborne, 11 November 1892, *John E. Osborne Papers*, Special Collections, Carbon County Public Library, Rawlins, Wyoming. John Hunton to Blanche Hunton, 26 October 1892, Hunton to John Taylor, November 17, 1892, *John Hunton Papers*, American Heritage Center; relative to party affairs see *Gibson Clark Papers*, State Parks and Cultural Resources Division, Wyoming Department of Commerce, Cheyenne. Republicans declined the Democrats' offer of holding public debates between Coffeen and Clarence Clark. See *Laramie Daily Boomerang*, 15 October 1892; *Cheyenne Sun*, 13-14 October 1892; Willis Van Devanter to A. L. New, 11 October 1892, *Willis Van Devanter Papers*, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

27. Warren to Edward A. Ivinston, 10 November 1892, *Warren Papers*; Warren to Clarence D. Clark, 10 November 1892, *Warren Papers*; George W. Baxter to William Daley, 11 June 1892, *William Daley Papers*, American Heritage Center; *Cheyenne State Leader*, 22 September, 9-10 November 1892; John K. Yoshida, "The Wyoming Election of 1892," M.A. thesis (Laramie: University of Wyoming, 1956); and Van Devanter to Ivinston, 1,2 November 1892, *Van Devanter Papers*. Willis Van Devanter, chairman of the Republican State Committee of Wyoming from 1892 to 1894, served as Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court from 1910 to 1937. See Lewis L. Gould, "Willis Van Devanter in Wyoming Politics, 1884-1897," Ph.D. dissertation (New Haven: Yale University, 1966).

28. Carolyn Goldinger, ed. *Presidential Elections Since 1789*, 4th ed. (Washington: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1987), p.109.

29. Larson, *History of Wyoming*, pp.286-87.

made friends easily with his outgoing disposition. Although highly partisan and blunt, he was never unkind or vicious. Coffeen served in the Fifty-third Congress, both branches of which were controlled by the Democrats. That victory, plus their simultaneous control of the presidency, was the first time they had accomplished the feat since before the Civil War. The prospect seemed favorable for a successful administration and Democratic ascendancy.

While in Congress Coffeen assumed an active role in the distribution of patronage for his state. He discussed the subject with Cleveland's private secretary, Henry T. Thurber, and he also approached the president directly on the matter. On various occasions he even left resumes of the people he was promoting for federal appointments. "I have made two or three calls at the White House," he informed Cleveland,

*Without being able to see you conveniently on a matter of importance to our State. The result of our failure to secure the very few appointments asked for in Wyoming is disintegrating our forces at a time when four (4) vacancies in our legislature likely to be called are to be filled and on these depend the success or defeat of our party in selecting a United States Senator. We are quite sure to lose the Senator as well as to lose future victories for Democracy if we can not very quickly secure a few democratic appointments under this democratic administration.<sup>30</sup>*

A little more than a week later Coffeen recommended John Charles Thompson for United States District Attorney for Wyoming and Perry Bickford for Surveyor Gen-

eral. "If the supremacy of Democracy in Wyoming and the election of United States Senators from our party are to be encouraged," he advised the president, "these appointments ought to be made now."<sup>31</sup>

Coffeen especially wanted John A. McDermott appointed United States Marshal for Wyoming. "He is one ...well qualified for the office, honorable, discreet, and true to his duties, and will be a fitting representative and a strength to a conservative Democratic administration," Coffeen notified Cleveland. He added:

*I trust you will deem it proper to nominate him without further delay.... There is no opposition to Mr. McDermott that requires serious consideration. He is the only candidate for that position that stands on that high plane that is above the petty factional conflicts that some novices in politics would occasionally seek to precipitate upon our party.... The present incumbent in the Marshallship of our state is so deeply complicated with the plans and movements of the 'invading cattle barons' of unsavory fame that it is a surprise to many republicans as well as nearly all democrats that he should have been permitted so long to keep his control of that office. In line with those same murderous 'invasions' so many of the land offices are still administered by their special friends and sympathizers that I trust you will heartily endorse recommendations for removing nearly all if not quite all the land officers by the Hon. Sec'y of the Interior [Hoke Smith] which action I believe he will recommend in a few days.<sup>32</sup>*

Worried about patronage for Wyoming, Coffeen decided to send Cleveland some excerpts of letters he had received regarding political affairs in the new state. Quoting from Ben Sheldon, Chairman of the Democratic Central Committee of Fremont County, Coffeen explained that Wyoming Democrats wondered why the administration had been so "negligent of Wyoming and its standing. Unless things change in Wyoming we as a party will be wiped out of existence in the next election." Coffeen further pointed out that Democrats had become the laughing stock of the entire "Republican gang" and "Cheyenne mob." Although he exhorted the people to exercise patience he complained that the procrastination could not last much longer.

*How shall ...explain to them? I have about exhausted my resources.... I trust you will at once appoint...officers ...and remove the present incumbents.*



Coffeen's House in Sheridan, 1994

Richard Collier, SHPO

30. Coffeen to Cleveland, 14 September 1893, *Cleveland Papers*.

31. Coffeen to Cleveland, 25 September 1893, *Cleveland Papers*.

32. Coffeen to Cleveland, 8 November 1893, *Cleveland Papers*; Also, Coffeen to Cleveland, 7 July 1894, *Cleveland Papers*.



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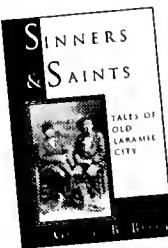


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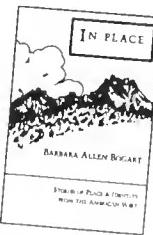
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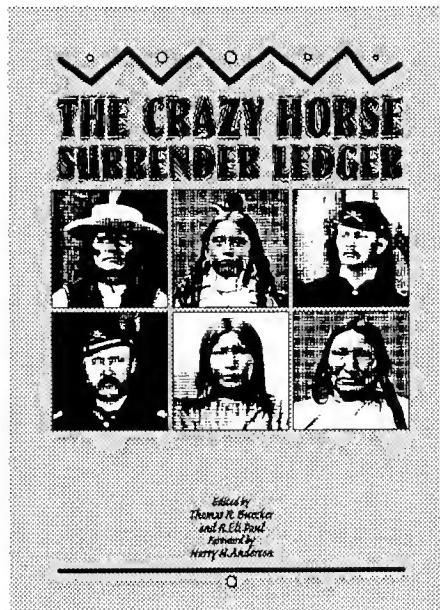
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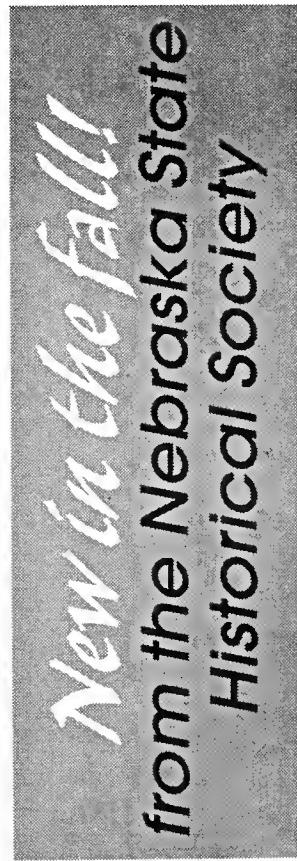


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*every one of whom are not only bitter and offensive partisans but more or less deeply involved in the conspiracies fostered by the State Republican gang against the welfare of our frontier settlements.... These matters are vital to the welfare of our people and state as well as to our party.*<sup>33</sup>

Coffeen was not alone in his requests for patronage. Governor Osborne also pleaded with Cleveland to expedite the selection process. "Unless we receive merited recognitions at an early date," he cationed the president,

*I fear that it will be too late, since our party leaders are at present almost completely discouraged, and are only buoyed up by the hope, that those to whom they must look for relief will be brought to a realizing sense of our deplorable condition before it is too late.*<sup>34</sup>

In addition to Coffeen and Osborne, A. L. New, chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee and descendant of a prominent Indiana family, pressured Cleveland on the matter of patronage. In an endeavor to obtain political plums for worthy Wyomingites and increase his power in the state, New, who failed in his quest to gain a United States Senate seat, emphasized in a message to Cleveland that he thought it "the duty of all loyal Democrats to sustain and co-operate with our President."<sup>35</sup> Coffeen supported Thompson for U.S. District Attorney and McDermott for Marshal, but New denounced them as unpopular men who would have a tendency to disintegrate the party.<sup>36</sup> Instead, New preferred Andrew McMicken for District Attorney and John S. Harper of Sundance for Marshal.<sup>37</sup> New surmised that Coffeen endorsed the men solely to discharge some personal obligation.<sup>38</sup> In any case, Cleveland chose Coffeen's men for these appointments, although both New and Coffeen agreed on Perry Bickford for Surveyor General.

While New professed to be working with Coffeen on the distribution of offices he was, in fact, actively engaged in clandestine maneuvers to stab Coffeen politically in the back. The ubiquitous chairman, caught in the middle by the vexatious currency issue, lumped Coffeen with the "silver fanatics," informing the chief executive of the Congressman's sympathies for the white metal.<sup>39</sup> Assuring Cleveland that he was the president's "devoted friend," New confidentially chastised Coffeen as one possessing "Populist tendencies" who had "seen fit to put himself on record adverse to the Administration."<sup>40</sup> A tenacious competitor, New had no qualms about his methods or conduct and seemed perfectly willing to sacrifice Coffeen to further his own ambitions. Coffeen played the game differently. He thought Cleveland disappointingly slow in making decisions on political posts and that the delay and

obfuscation cost Democrats dearly, keeping the party in Wyoming tied in knots. In this assessment Coffeen demonstrated more astute judgment and less rebarbative behavior than New.

The whole patronage affair exhibited a troubling pattern of ethical sloppiness and personal mishandling. Most of it was self-inflicted by jealous Wyoming Democrats more interested in demonstrating loyalty to Cleveland than in working together for the common good of party and state. The distrust and bickering resulted in an unnecessary division of party responsibility and unruly factionalism in a state that could ill-afford shenanigans that weakened its resolve in negotiations with Cleveland. Throbbing with intrigue and suspicion, the bungling episode became politically burdensome, confusing and entangling to the administration.

Although Coffeen disagreed with Cleveland over the timing of political appointments for Wyoming and urged the chief executive to respond more quickly, in 1893 he found an issue of even greater importance that further strained his relationship with the national administration. The currency issue had long plagued politicians of both parties. By the terms of the Coinage Act of 1873 the standard silver dollar had been demonetized or omitted from the coinage despite the increase in silver production resulting from new discoveries in the West. Silverites, charging that a gold conspiracy existed, demanded the free and unlimited coinage of both silver and gold at the ratio of sixteen to one. The Sherman Silver Purchase Act of 1890, a compromise between western silverites and eastern conservatives, required the Treasury to purchase 4,500,000 ounces of silver each month at the prevailing market price and to issue in payment legal tender notes redeemable in gold or silver at the option of the Treasury Secretary. The act signed by President Harrison had the effect of increasing circulation of redeemable paper currency and weakening the federal gold reserve while the nation was still officially on a bimetal standard. Not only did it fail to placate free coinage advocates, it also worried financial groups who feared silver inflation.

33. Coffeen to Cleveland, 14 September 1893, *Cleveland Papers*. In his letter Sheldon issued a blunt warning to Coffeen who, in turn, incorporated it into his message of September 14 to Cleveland:

*I have always been ready and willing to work early and late for the success of the party and presumed (as I had a right to) that when we were successful we would receive some of the benefits, but in this supposition it appears I was at fault.... With the failure of the Administration to extend any help in the way of appointments and the apparent dislike that shows so plain in every action in Washington we in Wyoming are getting the worst end of the string.... I do not desire you to think that any one blames you for this state of affairs as we all understand here that you have done all in your power to avert such a condition.*

34. John E. Osborne to Cleveland, 12 January 1894, *Cleveland Papers*.

35. A. L. New to Cleveland, August 19, 1893, *Cleveland Papers*.

36. New to Cleveland, 30 September 1893, *Cleveland Papers*.

37. New to Cleveland, 22, 27 September 1893, *Cleveland Papers*.

38. New to Cleveland, 27 September 1893, *Cleveland Papers*.

39. New to Cleveland, 11 August 1893, *Cleveland Papers*.

President Cleveland opposed the Sherman Silver Purchase Act. After the Panic of 1893 he sought to stem the drain on gold reserves and summoned Congress into special session to repeal the 1890 law. The bitter struggle over revocation involved a prolonged debate in the House and a lengthy filibuster in the Senate which cost the president dearly in political leverage.<sup>41</sup>

Coffeen favored free coinage, a position which put him at odds with the sound money Cleveland administration. During the House debate over repeal Coffeen enunciated his support of free silver and his opposition to repeal. On August 23, 1893, he put his thoughts on record in a speech before his House colleagues.

*The measure before the House clearly brings before us the question of bimetallism or gold monometallism. I favor the use of both gold and silver freely coined into the standard money of our country.... This present attack on silver is by the same forces practically - the gold power- that invaded our halls in the interest of money dealers before, in 1873, although now they come not stealthily as then. The monarchies and monetary agencies of Europe, as well as their allies in Wall Street, are now back of this effort here and trying to fasten upon our people the gold standard ...impoverishing our industries and enslaving our people.... Monometallism and the centralizing gold standard is the choice of weapon of monarchies. Bimetallism is the money basis of free countries and their protection against the tyrannies of shylocks and toll-gatherers.<sup>42</sup>*

Coffeen's arguments covered a wide range of topics. He railed against plutocracy, claiming that it was against democracy. Coffeen denounced the "treachery of gold."

40. New to Cleveland, 5 September 1893, *Cleveland Papers*. Also, New and Coffeen to Hoke Smith, 7 August 1893, *Appointment Papers*, Cheyenne Land Office, Department of the Interior, National Archives, Washington, DC; New to Cleveland, 31 October 1893, *Wyoming Appointment Papers*, Department of Justice, National Archives; New to John G. Carlisle, 1 June 1893, *Appointment Papers*, Colorado Collector of Internal Revenue, Department of the Treasury, National Archives. In June, 1893 Cleveland named New the Collector of Internal Revenue for Colorado and Wyoming. See New to Daniel S. Lamont, 20 June 1893, *Daniel S. Lamont Papers*, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

41. Studies of Cleveland and Democrats in the 1890s include Allan Nevins, *Grover Cleveland A Study in Courage* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1933); Horace Samuel Merrill, *Bourbon Leader: Grover Cleveland and the Democratic Party* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1957); and J. Rogers Hollingsworth, *The Whirligig of Politics: The Democracy of Cleveland and Bryan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963).

42. *Congressional Record*, 53rd Cong., 1st sess., 26 August 1893, XXV, Part 1, pp.627-32.

43. *Ibid.*

44. *Ibid.*, 29 August 1893, pp.801-02.

45. Coffeen to Cleveland, 15 January 1894, *Cleveland Papers*.

listed fundamental monetary principles, discussed appreciation versus depreciation, contended that the value of money depended on volume, and provided charts and figures to illustrate and substantiate his statements. Concluding that free coinage was the reliable standard and the only, the Wyoming legislator declared that free coinage of both metals on the old ratios would "cure all evils," as he put it, and keep the monetary system substantially free from fluctuations.<sup>43</sup> Coffeen's argument was to no avail. On August 28, 1893, the House voted 239 to 108 to rescind the Sherman Silver Purchase Act. Although Cleveland won, his victory split the Democratic party, foreshadowing the division that would occur three years later.

In spite of fundamental differences in 1893 over patronage and currency legislation, Coffeen endeavored to maintain loyalty to the Cleveland administration. By late 1893 he recognized that his political problems back home had multiplied and that various Democrats were scheming to undermine his influence in Washington. In January, 1894, Coffeen sent the president a letter in which he revealed that former territorial governor and Invasion supporter George W. Baxter, and A. C. Campbell, who had disliked Coffeen since the 1889 constitutional convention, were "trying to damage my credit as a Democrat and representative of the only Democracy in Wyoming that can command any influence there." The Congressman made clear that he and Governor Osborne were "trying to uphold your administration together with the Democracy that elected us" but that Campbell and his cohorts were attempting to ridicule the administration before the public and that they were not the men who should be allowed to "sit in judgement upon my Democracy or political conduct."<sup>44</sup>

The same day Coffeen wrote to Henry T. Thurber, Cleveland's private secretary. The Congressman referred to Baxter, Campbell, New and their coterie as "reactionary democrats" who had been endeavoring to prejudice the president against "those of us who have been the constant and true as well as victorious exponents of Democracy in our state." He exhorted Thurber to convince Cleveland "to give to our state the remaining Federal appointments that are so greatly needed to save the state to Democracy."<sup>45</sup> Months later Coffeen reminded Cleveland that



**Above:** campaign button, unidentified, Wyoming State Museum. Photo by Craig Pindell

the handful of "so called Democrats" in Wyoming who were fomenting trouble against the administration had political points to gain through other than regular and reliable democratic means.<sup>47</sup>

By 1894 Coffeen turned his attention to the tariff question. The 1892 Democratic platform included an attack on Republican protection as a fraud and robbery of the majority of the people for the benefit of a few. Condemning the McKinley Tariff of 1890 as "the culminating atrocity legislation." Democrats pledged to reduce duties and reform tariff laws.<sup>48</sup> In response to Cleveland's annual message, Congress reconvened to consider tariff reform. Representative William L. Wilson, a West Virginia Democrat who chaired the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, introduced a tariff for revenue only, with basic raw materials such as wool, coal, lumber and iron ore being on the free list. Wilson called it "a battle for human freedom."<sup>49</sup>

Debate on the Wilson bill opened in the House on January 9, 1894, and Coffeen delivered his speech in favor of the measure on January 30. He pointed out that "the whole subject of tariff debate and tariff legislation has been going on for years in a mistaken direction that leads ever to great confusion." Urging his colleagues to put the interests of the nation above their own sectional or partisan desires, Coffeen defined a statesman as one who does all he can for his people while a politician does all he can for himself. The Congressman also distinguished between a revenue tariff and high protectionism. He labeled the former as "the raising of funds for the Government, which is a legitimate function of governmental power" while the purpose of the latter was "protecting manufacturers in their wrenching prices and profits from all the people who are made tributary to them by force of law. This use of the power of taxation is illegitimate and unjust." Democrats wanted to establish justice and secure the weak against the encroachments of the strong, while plutocratic Republicans preferred to reverse these fundamental principles by protecting the strong, fleecing the weak and establishing injustice by law. "This is legalized robbery," thundered Coffeen.<sup>50</sup>

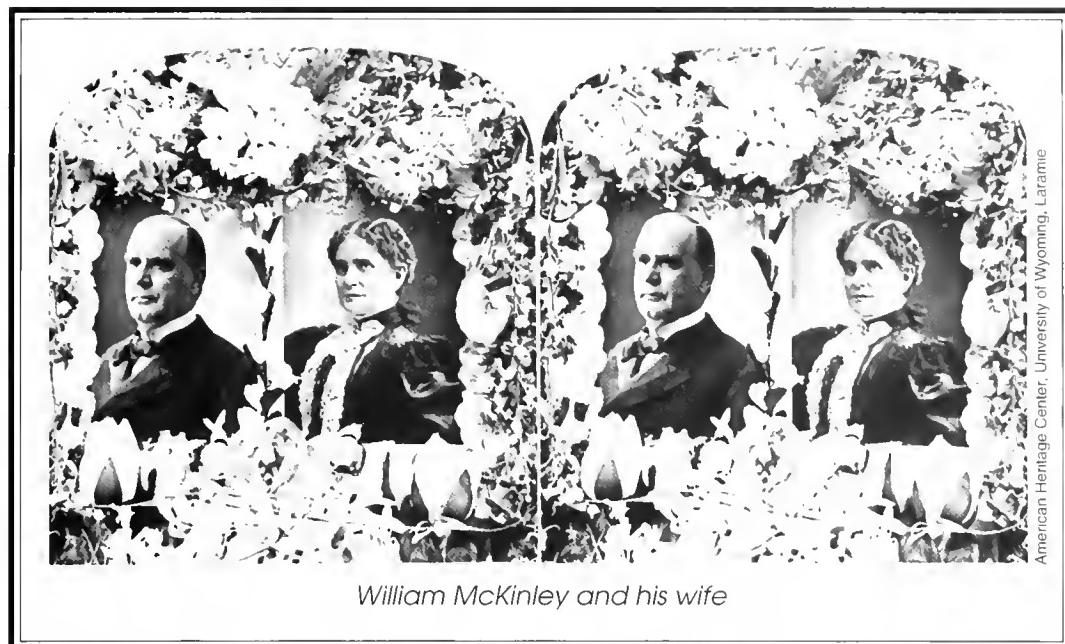
Coffeen's speech was noteworthy in several respects. First, he saw in the country a great contest between the oppressors and their victims. Second, he believed that millions of dollars could be saved by tariff reductions which would also emancipate wage earners from the servitude of tariff-protected trusts and monopolies. Third, he hit hard at various groups and individuals. He castigated "the tariff barons" of the New England states, excoriated former Congressman William McKinley of Ohio as the "Napoleon of protection" and for foisting "McKinleyism" on the nation, and he criticized former President Harrison. Finally, on the question of whether or not tariff restrictions could diversify industry, Coffeen answered with a resounding negative response.

*You cannot diversify and strengthen the onward march of industry by artificial restrictions or trade limitations. You can scatter, confuse, and weaken the progress of industry by tariff interferences, by limitations and restrictions upon trade, but cannot strengthen or diversify.<sup>51</sup>*

**A**ttached to the Wilson bill was a provision for a graduated income tax, a key plank in the 1892 Populist Party Platform. Support for the tax gained widespread support among western and southern representatives.<sup>52</sup> The income tax proposition, authored by Tennessee Democrat Benton McMillan, provided for a tax of two per cent on incomes above four thousand dollars, effective until January 1, 1900. For many the income tax provided the moral ammunition to fight "the conspiracy of Wall and Lombard Streets."<sup>53</sup> Southern and western advocates argued that under this law the farmer would no longer be forced to bear such a heavy taxation burden.

Coffeen wholeheartedly approved of the graduated income tax. In his January 30, 1894, speech he declared that "a light tax falling on those most able to bear taxation" could not "possibly cause any suffering nor disturbance of business." Moreover, an income tax would be more cheaply collected than internal revenue or tariff duties." He added: "Let the strong help bear the burdens for the weak, ought to be good political doctrine in a Christian nation. Who would not prefer a light tax on the abundance or ability of people, rather than a heavy tax on the want and inability of the poor?" Coffeen then listed twelve reasons why he supported adoption of the income tax and why a graduated income tax should be approved as a permanent way of paying the necessary expenses of the federal government. Basically, he thought that it was a "fair and flexible method of taxation, easily adjusted to needs of government, and simple in its operation." It would reverse the Republican doctrine of taxing the many for the benefit of the few, and it recognized the principle that "all ought to contribute to the support of the Government according to their ability to pay." Coffeen's final two reasons for endorsing the income tax neatly summarize his outlook as a Gilded Age Democrat and western politician:

*It is a wise move considered politically, socially, or morally, and will tend to show the discouraged workers in every field of activity that the Government under Democratic administrations has due regard for their welfare. It is just and equitable, and let justice be done, that a government of the people, by the people, and for the people may long endure upon the earth, and prove that the Congress here assembled in the year 1894 can do some good work toward redeeming the overburdened and discouraged people of our land from the organized greed and cunning avarice of the money power.<sup>54</sup>*



*William McKinley and his wife*

American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie

Coffeen's distrust of "the organized greed and cunning avarice of the money power" constituted his fundamental philosophy in the 1890s and represented the foundation upon which he served his constituents while in Congress.

The Wilson bill, with the income tax provision, passed the House of Representatives on February 1, 1894 by a vote of 204 to 140. Coffeen voted for the measure, but eighteen Democrats registered their opposition. The Senate over the next five months emasculated the measure by adding 634 amendments that destroyed the bill's original character. Senators from both parties sought to protect the industries of their respective states, resulting in a mangled measure that shortened the free list. Representative Champ Clark of Missouri protested that the proposal had been "chopped into mincemeat" by that "nauseous mess" of protective amendments.<sup>55</sup> Coffeen denounced the multiplicity of selfish interests that had altered the original bill and voided the Democratic pledge of reform. A disgusted Cleveland, who deprecated the incorporation of the income tax proposal, refused to sign the finished act thereby permitting the measure to become law on August 28 without his signature. The president also wrote a blistering letter to Congressman Wilson attacking protectionist Democratic senators who in his opinion had committed "party perfidy and party dishonor."<sup>56</sup>

The tariff imbroglio was a discouraging moment for Coffeen. He maintained that the people in 1892 had charged the Democrats to reform the tariff. Although he disliked the Senate version, he denounced the Republicans more than protectionist Democrats for the result. Coffeen promised that the work would go on until all trusts were subjugated and that this was but the first battle for tariff reform. Concluding that the Wilson-Gorman Tariff of 1894 was superior to the McKinley Tariff of 1890 and

that Democrats had taken the correct initial step, Coffeen said on August 13:

*E*ngaged for many years in [Wyoming] as a merchant, I feel safe in saying that the family of average size and habits of life use such quantity of woolen goods that the reduction of tariff tax on these goods alone from 98 per cent under the McKinley law to 41 per cent under this Democratic bill will save from \$50 to \$100 to each average fam-

46. Coffeen to Thurber, 15 January 1894, *Cleveland Papers*

47. Coffeen to Cleveland, 7 July 1894, *Cleveland Papers*.

48. Kirk H. Porter (comp.), *National Party Platforms* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1924), p.161. See also William L. Wilson, "The Tariff Plank at Chicago," *The North American Review*, CLV (September, 1892):280-86

49. *Congressional Record*, 53rd Cong., 2nd sess., 1 February 1894, XXVI, Part 9, p.205

50. *Ibid.*, 4 February 1894, XXVI, Part 4, pp.2149-56.

51. *Ibd.*

52. Lindley M. Keasbey, "The New Sectionalism: A Western Warning to the East," *The Forum*, XVI (January, 1894):578-87.

53. William Vincent Allen, "Western Feeling Towards the East," *The North American Review*, CLXII (May, 1896):588-93

54. *Congressional Record*, 53rd Cong., 2nd sess., 4 February 1894, XXVI, Part 4, pp.2154-55.

55. Champ Clark, *My Quarter Century of American Politics*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1920), I, pp.337-38; Festus P. Summers, *William L. Wilson and Tariff Reform* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1953), pp.175-86; Edward Stanwood, *American Tariff Controversies in the Nineteenth Century*, 2 vols. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1903), II, pp.308-56.

56. Cleveland to William L. Wilson, 2 July 1894, *Cleveland Papers*. Under Chief Justice Melville W. Fuller the Supreme Court, in the 1895 case of *Pollok v. Farmers' Loan and Trust Company*, held that the income tax provision of the 1894 tariff was unconstitutional.



Richard Collier, SHPO

View of Main Street in Sheridan looking north from corner of Loucks and Main. The historic Coffeen Block is located beneath the facade of the contemporary Uptown-Downtown Mall building at right, 1994.

*ily. Every family in the State will receive the benefits of this reduction, even though a few wool-growers may lose something on the price of wool.... This bill will be a great victory for the common people of our country.... The Democracy is essential to the preservation of free institutions and liberty of the individual on the American continent; and our Democratic party will go on recovering from its mistakes and overcoming the treachery of its enemies by the very instincts of the party and genius of its name and righteousness of its principles until the money power and bond and gold standard forces are overthrown and the rights of every man, woman, and child are reestablished again in this country, without any further intolerable tribute to either the gold barons or tariff barons of the Atlantic coast.<sup>57</sup>*

Disappointments over the repeal of the Sherman Act and protective amendments wedged to the Wilson bill

compounded Coffeen's difficulties as a first term congressman from Wyoming. Constituents began to ask how he could continue defending the Cleveland administration. Calling the demonetization of silver in 1873 "the crime of the age," Coffeen replied that the Democratic party, regardless of its current leader, was "the true bimetallic and silver party," while Republicans were "the gold standard and bond-issue party." He assured people: "The next step before the great party of the people, after having so promptly overthrown the citadels of the high-tariff barons is to turn now upon the citadels of the money power." According to Coffeen, Wall Street was the problem. He noted that every Republican president since Ulysses S. Grant had been against free coinage and that they had been joined in Congress by Republicans and "cuckoo Democrats." Coffeen, who labeled himself an "antirepeal bill Democrat," tried to defend Cleveland:

*I am deeply regretting the present Executive*



J.E. Stimson Collection, Wyoming State Museum  
View of Main Street looking north, Sheridan, Wyo., 1910

[Cleveland] also has followed in that same line, and I believe they are all wrong. But it is not possible for any man to re-publicanize the Democratic party on the silver question. The Republican party is still responsible for demonetizing silver and keeping it demonetized so far. If we have a Chief Executive today that is against silver and holding to the gold standard Republicans, it is but a temporary and political accident of the times. It is but what might naturally be expected to happen to the Democratic party ...if they go into



New York to find presidential candidates. Surrounded by all the glittering temptations and plutocratic powers and policies of Wall Street, and taught purely from their standpoint, we need not look for any true Democracy on the money question from that quarter of the country. It is full of adherents to the European money power.... Neither upon them [so-called congressional Democrats] nor the President would I charge dishonesty, but they are wrong on these questions. The Democratic party in the interior, and in the great and rising West, and in the South ...is right and will stand ...by the free and unlimited coinage of both gold and silver.<sup>58</sup>

Another issue of concern to westerners in 1894 was that of irrigation and arid lands. Coffeen delivered a sig-

57. *Congressional Record*, 53rd Cong., 2nd sess., 24 August 1894, XXVI, Part 18, pp.10345-49.

58. *Ibid.*

nificant speech on the subject in the House on August 15. Affirming that government-supported irrigation could be a source of revenue, Coffeen demanded congressional appropriations to purchase a site and then erect a government building in Cheyenne for the accommodation of federal business. He then wanted the federal government to

*enter upon the reclamation of the arid lands of the West, and for the time being control the distribution of the reclaimed lands to the actual settlers.... We should not be denied justice for our States in the West because our population is small. We are growing in the West, and sooner or later we will be able to make our power felt more strongly than now in the Halls of Congress.... So long as I shall be sent to represent Wyoming on this floor I shall work and vote against all measures that would in any manner permit land-holding corporations to come between the people and the ownership of land so necessary to their welfare and the safety of our Republic.... There is an undeveloped empire sleeping in the West and awaiting the touch of wisdom and strength to awake it and call it into a life of beauty and grandeur.... You call it a desert now; but then the desert shall blossom as the rose and the waving fields of yellow grain and the fattening cattle on a thousand hills shall be the heritage of our children in the great and farther West of the future.<sup>59</sup>*

In 1894 Coffeen sought seek re-election to another two-year term in the House. During his service in Congress he had secured the passage of a bill establishing a federal court

59. *Ibid.*, 28 August 1894, pp 10421-26. Also, Henry A Coffeen, *The Irrigation Problem: Should the Arid Lands be Ceded to the States?* (Washington: Congressional Printing Office, 1894). The Carey Act was passed on August 18, 1894 and authorized the president to grant each public lands state a maximum of one million acres within its boundaries for irrigation, reclamation, cultivation and settlement. It was named for Joseph M. Carey, Wyoming Senator from 1890 to 1895 and Governor of Wyoming from 1911 to 1915. See George W. Paulson, "The Congressional Career of Joseph Maull Carey," *Annals of Wyoming* XXXV (1963):53-63, and Betsy R. Peters, "Joseph M. Carey and the Progressive Movement in Wyoming" Ph.D. dissertation (Laramie: University of Wyoming, 1971). Wyoming was the first state to accept the government's offer under this law. Coffeen, who endorsed most of the ideas incorporated into the act, suspected that land syndicates and powerful cattlemen wanted to use it for their own benefit. See Larson, *History of Wyoming*, p.303. An era of rapid settlement commencing in the 1880s resulted in a 300 per cent increase in Wyoming's population within ten years. The federal census of 1890 listed the state's population as 62,555. *Wyoming A Guide to its History, Highways, and People* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), p.74; T. A. Larson, *Wyoming: A Bicentennial History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1977), p.100.

60. *Rawlins Republican*, 13 September 1894; Gould, *Wyoming*, pp.199-200.

61. This subject has been covered in Carlos A. Schwantes, *Coxey's Army: An American Odyssey* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985).

62. Books on the Pullman Strike include Almont Lindsey, *The Pullman Strike: The Story of a Unique Experiment and of a Great Labor Upheaval* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942); William H. Carwardine, *The Pullman Strike*, 4th ed. (Chicago: Published by C.H. Kerr for the Illinois Labor History Society, 1973).

63. Warren to T. A. Kent, 16 June 1894, *Warren Papers*. Also, Gould, *Wyoming*, pp.193-94 and Larson, *History of Wyoming*, pp.295-98.

64. New to Cleveland, 27 September 1894, *Cleveland Papers*; New to Cleveland, 16 July 1894, 15 August 1894, *Cleveland Papers*.

in Sheridan, advocated free coinage of silver and gold without an international agreement, supported tariff reform, endorsed a graduated income tax and fought for patronage. Coffeen was justifiably proud in serving as a spokesman for the West. Relegated to relatively unimportant committees and holding office during a sound money administration that disavowed most of his positions, Coffeen must have felt frustrated at times in his inability to accomplish many of his goals. Wyoming residents desperately wanted federal aid but Coffeen belonged to a Congress which, in an era of hard times, kept tight purse strings. As a result he encountered enormous obstacles in trying to obtain projects and subsidies for the region.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, a series of swift-moving events in two years had dramatically turned the tide against the Democracy.

**T**he year 1894 was not a good one for Democratic office holders. The nation was in the midst of a severe depression that had begun with the Panic of 1893. Legions of unemployed workers contributed to the national malaise. Ohio Populist Jacob S. Coxey gathered scattered groups of jobless men during the winter of 1893 and 1894 for a march on Washington to demand a public works relief program of road construction and local improvements.<sup>61</sup> The Pullman Strike called by the American Railway Union under the leadership of Eugene V. Debs occurred in the summer of 1894. When violence broke out President Cleveland, over the protest of Illinois Governor John Peter Altgeld, sent federal troops to restore order.<sup>62</sup> It seemed as if political protest, economic distress and social tension had gripped the nation. An unpopular chief executive, losing control of his party, remained virtually closeted in the White House. Wyoming suffered as did other sections of the country during the Depression. Francis E. Warren, former governor and senator, whose personal business failed, painted a bleak picture when he reported empty stores, quiet business streets, and unpainted houses in Cheyenne.<sup>63</sup>

Ominous signs in Wyoming indicated that national problems had infiltrated state politics, placing regional Democrats in a precarious position. "The Wyoming Democracy seems to have utterly gone to pieces," A.L. New related in a portentous letter to Cleveland, "and unless heroic measures are adopted there will be not the remotest chance of any kind of a victory for the Democracy." New elaborated on how a "gang of disorganizers" had concocted a systematic and determined scheme to betray the Democratic state ticket into the hands of the enemy whom he identified as "the land steal and cattle ring advocates." He emphasized that he had been in the right from start to finish and could not foresee the slightest chance for anything excepting an overwhelming defeat.<sup>64</sup>

In addition to his association with the Cleveland administration, several other factors put Coffeen's re-elec-

tion in jeopardy. These problems mounted as the year 1894 progressed. First, the Congressman's vote for free wool in the Wilson-Gorman Tariff angered Wyoming sheepraisers who wanted protection from foreign competition. Second, Coffeen's waning popularity nosedived in July when news broke of a scandal involving Perry Bickford, the person he wanted for Surveyor General. A Laramie sexagenarian with a wife and family, Bickford used his position to support a Cheyenne prostitute who committed suicide. Republicans quickly exploited the issue but Coffeen pleaded with Cleveland, whose use of patronage had divided Wyoming Democrats, to suspend rash judgments on the case and to remember that "...a few reactionary democrats" had "political points to gain through other than regular and reliable democratic means."<sup>65</sup> Third, groups of roving unemployed men started capturing trains in the West in a plan to travel to Washington to present their grievances. Train stealing in the West, coming on the heels of the Pullman Strike, convinced many in Wyoming that social upheaval had transpired under the Democrats and that restoration of law and order was necessary.<sup>66</sup> Finally, Wyoming Populists hoping to win on their own refused to accept fusion with the Democrats in 1894 because of Cleveland's anti-silver and anti-Populist policies. This anti-fusion attitude delivered still another setback to Coffeen and his plan to retain a House seat.<sup>67</sup>

The beleaguered Coffeen encountered additional obstacles in 1894. At the Democratic State Convention in August, A.L. New's blocking of a resolution condemning the Cleveland administration sharpened differences among intraparty factions.<sup>68</sup> Coffeen obtained renomination without opposition or enthusiasm at the convention but he had to carry heavy baggage during the campaign. In the past he had the support of John F. Carroll, editor of the *Cheyenne Daily Leader*, a Democratic newspaper. Frustrated by Coffeen's treatment of Wyoming Democrats, Carroll shifted his allegiance, defecting to the Republicans. Although the newspaper became independent, Carroll concentrated his wrath on Coffeen and his alleged disservices to Wyoming.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, in September the army closed Fort McKinney at Buffalo after Coffeen helped influence Secretary of War Daniel S. Lamont to move the fort to Sheridan. The astute Francis E. Warren, Wyoming Republican senator (1891-1893, 1895-1929) considered the relocation a mistake. "It has long been known by men of sense," he noted, "that to intimate to the War Department a desire to change the location of a post, or to cut down a reservation, is to invite its destruction."<sup>70</sup>

**O**n election day November 6, 1894, Coffeen experienced a resounding defeat. His Republican opponent, Franklin W. Mondell, Newcastle mayor, miner and oilman, overwhelmed him 10,068 votes

to 6,152. Populist candidate Shakespeare E. Sealey received 2,906 votes.<sup>71</sup> Even the combined Democratic-Populist vote registered below Mondell's total. Mondell carried all Wyoming counties except two: Johnson, which Coffeen won by six votes, and Sheridan, which went to its favorite son by twenty-one votes. Other Democrats fared as badly as Coffeen. Republicans William A. Richards, Charles W. Burdick and William O. Owen were elected Governor, Secretary of State, and State Auditor, respectively. Moreover, Republicans swamped the Democratic opposition in the state legislature by taking 48 of 55 seats.

The Democratic drubbing in Wyoming mirrored off-year congressional results across the nation. The Republican revolution cost Democrats 113 seats in the House and five in the Senate, enabling the GOP to control the House with 244 members to 104 Democrats, of whom many were southerners. Moreover, in 24 states Democrats failed to elect a single person to the lower chamber. Republican gains represented the largest turnover since the Civil War.<sup>72</sup> The GOP resurgence in 1894 signaled a po-



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65. Coffeen to Cleveland, 27 July 1894, *Cleveland Papers*; Perry Bickford to Cleveland, 5 January 1895, *Cleveland Papers*; Gould, *Wyoming*, pp.213-14.

66. The overriding issues in 1894 were economic. For an excellent account of the 1894 campaign in Wyoming see Gould, *Wyoming*, pp.193-229.

67. Warren to J. S. Clarkson, 13 October 1894, *Warren Papers*; Gould, *Wyoming*, p.215.

68. *Ibid.* Also, *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 10 August 1894.

69. Van Devanter to J. W. Babcock, September Z0, 1894, *Van Devanter Papers*; Gould, *Wyoming*, pp.217-18; New to Cleveland, 27 September 1894, *Cleveland Papers*; Hunton to John F. Carroll, 27 September 1894, *Hunton Papers*.

70. Letters of Warren to Fred Bond, C. H. Parmelee, and E. H. Smock, 22 September 1894, *Warren Papers*; Gould, *Wyoming*, p.216.

71. Erwin, *Wyoming Historical Blue Book*, p.1184.

Above: Frank Mondell  
Middle: Charles Burdick  
Bottom: W.O. Owen, 1927

litical realignment that for the most part would last until the Great Depression of the 1930s.<sup>73</sup>

**F**ollowing the election Coffeen was a lame duck congressman. In February, 1895 he delivered his last major addresses before the House on the subjects of debts, bond issues, the misery of depression-engulfed people and the currency question. Coffeen emphasized that "instead of relief for the country our cuckoo Democrats, by following the demonetizing Republicans, have brought our country to the lowest prices on record on our great and staple products."<sup>74</sup> He queried why Americans should follow the Republicans "in their mad career after the gold standard."<sup>75</sup> Coffeen claimed that gold monometallism was a failure, that Americans would not tolerate much longer the crisis of confidence that had long plagued them, and with a stern reprimand recalled Abraham Lincoln's prophecy about the dangers of big business: "So, now, ye Republican jumping jacks operated by a Wall street string, and ye Democratic cuckoos, ever anxious to call out the plausible sophistries of the money power, take warning in time."<sup>76</sup> His words, except for their antique flavor, have a familiar ring one hundred years later.

*We must prove ourselves men and patriots and true to the trust the people have placed in our hands.... From what I have witnessed ...I must conclude that it is exceedingly difficult for many ...but ...arises from either ignorance or cowardice. No others will surrender to this money power in this great crisis. Stand, then, for your people and the right.<sup>77</sup>*

*And I shall close with a warning and a challenge to the money power that if it shall not curb its selfishness and greed and realize that its votaries are but part of the great struggling mass of humanity ...then the people must rise up, and, if need be,*

*crush their enemies by whatever means are lawful in defense of the life and liberty of this country and its people.<sup>78</sup>*

Upon his return to Sheridan in 1895 Coffeen resumed an active role in the community. An avid reader whose library contained numerous volumes, Coffeen sought to advance education and learning. He rented halls in Sheridan, paid for his own lectures and delivered some seminars.<sup>79</sup>

Even though he was retired from politics Coffeen took an active interest in the presidential campaign of 1896 and the free silver crusade, a milestone in the conflict between agrarian and industrial America. At the Democratic National Convention in Chicago that July, Wyoming's six delegates voted unanimously on the first ballot for free-silverite Senator Joseph C. S. Blackburn of Kentucky. On the second tally their vote went to William Jennings Bryan of Nebraska, and they remained loyal to the former congressman through the next four ballots which culminated in his presidential nomination.<sup>80</sup> The Wyoming delegation also voted to ostracize the Cleveland administra-

tion and endorse a free silver platform. Wyoming's C. W. Brumel secured a place on the Committee on Resolutions while William H. Holliday, the unsuccessful 1894 gubernatorial candidate, served on the Executive Committee of the Democratic National Committee.

Although Coffeen was not one of Wyoming's three presidential electors in 1896, he would have relished the role. His good friend William Jennings Bryan, who also obtained the Populist Party's nomination for president, championed the same causes as Coffeen. Bryan had great respect for the Wyoming Democrat and the two men often conferred on strategy and issues while serving in Congress.<sup>81</sup> Bryan's nomination in 1896 disrupted the Democracy nationally but he carried Wyoming by 790 popular votes over his Republican opponent William McKinley,

72. Richard E. Welch, Jr., *The Presidencies of Grover Cleveland* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1988), p.202; Walter D. Burnham, *Presidential Ballots, 1836-1892* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1955), p.155.

73. James B. Weaver to William Jennings Bryan, 9 November 1894, *William Jennings Bryan Papers*, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress. Also, Joseph W. Babcock and Charles J. Faulkner, "The Meaning of the Elections," *The North American Review*, CLIX (December, 1894):742-54.

74. Congressional Record, 53rd Cong., 3rd sess., 7 February 1895, XXVII, Part 4, p.237.

75. *Ibid.*

76. *Ibid.*, 8 January 1895, p.94.

77. *Ibid.*, p.87.

78. *Ibid.*, 6 February 1895, Part 3, p.1873; 25 January 1895, Part 2, pp.1385-88; Henry A. Coffeen, *The Currency* (Washington: Congressional Printing Office, 1895).

79. *The Sheridan Post*, 10 December 1912; *The Wyoming Tribune, Cheyenne State Leader*, 12 December 1912; *The Laramie Republican*, 11, 14 December 1912.

80. William Jennings Bryan, *The First Battle* (Chicago: W. B. Conkey Company, 1896), pp.214-18; Samuel Pasco of Florida to Cleveland, 15 April 1896, *Cleveland Papers*; Robert F. Durden, "The 'Cow-Bird' Grounded: The Populist Nomination of Bryan and Watson in 1896," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, L (December, 1963):397-423.

81. *Laramie Daily Boomerang*, 14 August 1896. The contest has been covered in Robert F. Durden, *The Climax of Populism: The Election of 1896* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1966), and Stanley L. Jones, *The Presidential Election of 1896* (Madison University of Wisconsin Press, 1964).

a sound money Ohio Republican who won the election.<sup>82</sup> In Wyoming ex-Governor Osborne defeated Congressman Mondell to regain Coffeen's former House seat for the Democrats.<sup>83</sup> Ironically Coffeen probably would have done better running for Congress in 1896.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, had Bryan captured the presidential chair Coffeen no doubt would have received an administrative appointment. Both men saw silver as the paramount issue in 1896. For them it was a panacea and sacred dogma. Like Bryan, Coffeen not only excavated the money issue in all its ramifications but also embedded it within his own political experience.

After Bryan's unsuccessful forays into presidential politics in 1896 and 1900, the return of prosperity under President McKinley, and the enactment of the Gold Standard Act in 1900, Coffeen's interests moved in other directions. He spent his final years mostly in business and literary pursuits. In 1908 he wrote an introduction to *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ*, a book on the philosophical and practical basis of religion.<sup>85</sup> He maintained the copyright for that edition of the book whose author was Levi H. Dowling, an Ohio medical doctor, preacher and prohibitionist. From 1908 until 1911 Coffeen served as a member of the University of Wyoming Board of Trustees. He died at Sheridan of a stroke on December 8, 1912, one month after the presidential triumph of Democrat Woodrow Wilson and three years before John B. Kendrick, who revived the Wyoming Democracy, occupied the governor's mansion.<sup>86</sup> Following funeral services Coffeen's body was interred in the Sheridan Cemetery.<sup>87</sup>

Coffeen was a Gilded Age political figure committed to political, economic and social reform. He was in political philosophy a Jeffersonian Democrat who favored strict enforcement of laws regulating trusts and he exhibited a passion for helping people. He saw the income tax as a means to advance the common man and viewed free silver as a tool for economic justice and redistribution of the nation's wealth. Regrettably, however, he was not a consummate politician and stumbled through the electoral minefields of 1894. In Congress Coffeen was a prophet without honor in his own party. The Wyoming vote of no confidence in Cleveland's leadership was also a negative

referendum on Coffeen. Fortunately, the Sheridan politician was active in the Masons, Shriners and the Old Settlers' Club and reestablished much of his reputation during his post-congressional years. His loyalty to Wyoming cannot be doubted, and he remains in history as a founder of Sheridan city and county, an author of the state constitution, a Democratic Party builder and a representative of his state. He was a fascinating figure in Wyoming history. In an editorial eulogy on Coffeen's life the *Sheridan Enterprise* offered several observations on the grand old man.

"Mr. Coffeen was a man who won his place in the public eye because he was a thinker. And he was a thinker with the power of originality and individuality behind him. While in political life he studied the great problems of his country because he wanted to best serve that country.... Mr. Coffeen was a faithful and loyal member of the democratic party, and there was never a man who had the temerity to question the intensity of his devotion to his party.... His political party loses a shrewd, discerning worker, while his friends and his family will feel keenly the loss of a loyal, warm-hearted and honorable gentleman."<sup>88</sup>

BORN IN OHIO, LEONARD SCHLUP (1943- ) DEVELOPED AN EARLY INTEREST IN HISTORY WHILE ATTENDING KENMORE HIGH SCHOOL IN AKRON AND LEARNING ABOUT HIS GENEALOGY FROM FAMILY MEMBERS. HE EARNED DEGREES FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON (B.A.), KENT STATE UNIVERSITY (M.A.), INDIANA UNIVERSITY (M.L.S.) AND THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHAMPAIGN-URBANA (PH.D.). HE RECEIVED A FELLOWSHIP FROM THE ILLINOIS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOR HIS DISSERTATION ON ADLAI E. STEVENSON, WHOSE BIOGRAPHY HE IS COMPLETING.

DR. SCHLUP'S RESEARCH INTERESTS RELATE MAINLY TO GILDED AGE AND PROGRESSIVE ERA POLITICS. HIS PUBLISHED WORKS INCLUDE BOOK REVIEWS, NEWSPAPER ESSAYS AND MORE THAN 150 ARTICLES FOR HISTORY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE JOURNALS. HE HAS BEEN COMMISSIONED TO WRITE SEVENTY BIOGRAPHICAL ENTRIES FOR THE *American National Biography*, A MULTI-VOLUME WORK TO BE PUBLISHED BY OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE AMERICAN COUNCIL OF LEARNED SOCIETIES. DR. SCHLUP'S INTEREST IN HENRY COFFEEN GREW FROM HIS DISSERTATION RESEARCH AND FROM WORK ON ARTICLES RELATING TO OTHER WESTERN POLITICAL LEADERS. HE AUTHORED "A TAFT REPUBLICAN: SENATOR FRANCIS E. WARREN AND NATIONAL POLITICS," WHICH APPEARED IN THE FALL, 1982 ISSUE OF *Annals*.

DR. SCHLUP'S CAREER INCLUDES PREP SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY HISTORY TEACHING AND REFERENCE LIBRARY WORK. CURRENTLY HE IS HISTORY BIBLIOGRAPHER AND REFERENCE LIBRARIAN AT THE AKRON-SUMMIT COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY IN OHIO. AMONG HIS MANY OUTSIDE INTERESTS ARE TRAVEL, WRITING, GARDENING, CARS, SPORTS AND THE MEN'S MOVEMENT.

**Photos:** Cuckoo on p. 30, 43; John James Audubon, *The Birds of America* (New York: MacMillan Co., 1942) plate 169.



Margo Saikaly

82. Goldinger, *Presidential Elections Since 1789*, p.110.

83. Osborne, chairman of the Wyoming delegation to the Democratic National Convention in 1896, served in Congress until 1899. He was First Assistant Secretary of State under President Woodrow Wilson from 1913 to 1917.

84. For information on the campaign of 1896 in Wyoming see Gould, *Wyoming*, pp.230-61.

85. Levi H. Dowling, *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ* (Los Angeles: Henry A. Coffeen and DeVorss & Company, 1908).

86. Kendrick was Governor from 1915 to 1917 and United States Senator from 1917 to 1933.

87. *The Sheridan Post*, 10 December 1912.

88. *The Sheridan Enterprise*, 11 December 1912.



# **WYOMING POLITICIANS SHAPING OF UNITED INDIAN POLICY, 1945 TO**



# AND THE STATES 1980

*elations between Native Americans and the federal government in the period following the World War II era have only recently been subjected to serious scholarly research. Scarcer yet are studies which contain an analysis of a particular state's relationships with Indians. What you will read in this article is an assessment of the factors that influenced the behavior of Wyoming politicians who played particularly active roles in the formulation and implementation of federal Indian policy since World War II. You will learn something about the motivations of the politicians who were active in Indian affairs in light of their own Western and Wyoming values.*

**-Steven C. Schulte**

Opposite: *O'Mahoney for Senator* postcard, n.d. Caption on the reverse side reads: "This striking photograph of Senator Joseph C. O'Mahoney shows him at the window of the private office in the Capitol Building which was assigned to him..."

Unless otherwise noted, all photos in this article are courtesy of the Wyoming State Museum; drawings taken from *The Book of Indians* by Holling C. Holling (Chicago: The Platt & Munk Co., Inc., 1935).

## PROLOGUE:

### Politics and the Rejection of the Indian New Deal

A brief sketch of federal Indian policy in the present century is necessary to be able to understand post-1945 developments. From the enactment of the Dawes Allotment Act in 1887, the federal government emphasized assimilation of Indians through individualized landholding patterns. Until 1934 when the Allotment Act was officially repudiated, Indians lost more than ninety million acres of land to Whites.<sup>1</sup> The Wind River Reservation was reduced by one-third following Wyoming's implementation of the allotment program in 1906. The years from 1887 to 1934, constituted, in one observer's words, the era of "the Great Indian Depression," the most tragic and difficult years of re-adjustment within Indian memory. In addition to tremendous land losses, forced Americanization programs eradicated many vital tribal customs, the cement that held Native cultures together.<sup>2</sup>

The Depression years of the 1930s brought radical changes to the direction of federal Indian policy. Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier believed the Indian New Deal, embodied in a cumbersome piece of legislation known as the Wheeler-Howard or Indian Reorganization Act (I.R.A.), had two overarching goals: economic and spiritual rehabilitation of Indian peoples. Economically, the I.R.A. ended the disastrous allotment policy while making loans available so tribes could start to rebuild their diminished land bases. Spiritually the



1. Arrell M. Gibson, *The American Indian: Prehistory to the Present* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), p.506. Figures for total acres alienated during this era vary by source, but Gibson argues that the total Indian land estate was reduced from 150 million acres in 1887 to 48 million in 1934. Much of what remained, according to Gibson, was desert. A concise description of the opening of the Wind River Reservation to White settlement in 1906 is contained in T.A. Larson, *A History of Wyoming*, Second Edition, Revised (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), pp.351-353.

2. Herbert T. Hoover, "Yankton Sioux Experience in the Great Indian Depression, 1900-1930," in Ronald Lora, ed., *The American West: Essays in Honor of W. Eugene Hollon* (Toledo: The University of Toledo, 1980), p.53. Hoover quotes a 1969 interview with a Sisseton Sioux that was originally published in Herbert T. Hoover and Joseph H. Cash, *To Be An Indian* (New York: Holt, Rinhart, and Winston, 1971), p.109. For a more optimistic appraisal of these years see Frederick Hoxie, "From Prison to Homeland: The Cheyenne River Indian Reservation Before World War One," *South Dakota History* 10 (1979):1-24.



Map by Jack Studley

Wind River  
Reservation

● Casper

Cheyenne ●

W Y O M I N G

The Wind River  
Reservation in  
the state of  
Wyoming (not to  
scale)

Wheeler-Howard Act dismantled the government's forced assimilation program. Under the Indian New Deal, the Bureau of Indian Affairs began encouraging cultural revitalization. It also provided for tribal reorganization, an optional program that allowed tribes to incorporate and take over the reins of self-government. Collier outlined the I.R.A.'s spiritual goals: "...awakening of the racial spirit must be sustained, if the rehabilitation of the Indian people is to be successfully carried through."<sup>3</sup>

Wyoming's Wind River tribes, the Arapahos and the Shoshones, rejected the tribal reorganization provisions of the I.R.A. despite the fact that Collier had worked tirelessly to convince Northern Plains tribes to ratify it. From the start of Collier's campaign, the Wind River tribes seemed predisposed against the self-government proposal. The Shoshones and Arapahos had lost more than one and a half million acres during the allotment era, but the tribes managed to adjust as well as could be expected to this disastrous policy. It is no exaggeration to say that they entered the 1930s as economically healthy as any Indian tribes in America. While their economy and lifestyle were by no means thriving, a growing conservatism encouraged by local influential whites and state politicians worked against their accepting the Wheeler-Howard Act.<sup>4</sup>

The tribes refused to organize under the provisions of the Wheeler-Howard Act. In an early, non-binding poll of tribal members the Shoshones voted 153 to 5 against the measure while the Arapahoes trounced it 115-1. The official vote for organization on June 15, 1935, saw a high turnout. This time the Arapahoes defeated the bill 238-117. The Shoshones responded to a strong Bueau of Indian Affairs I.R.A. publicity onslaught by voting to organize by 175-174. The BIA ruled that both tribes would have to accept the act to implement it on the reservation. So, unlike the majority of Northern Plains tribes, Wyoming's Native Americans did not accept political reorganization under the Wheeler-Howard Act. When the bill first appeared in February, 1934 Arapaho Chief Henry Lee Tyler reacted favorably to some of its provisions, especially cultural revitalization. But shortly thereafter local white newspaper editors, ranchers, and politicians began agitating against the program. Lander's *Wyoming State Journal* reported



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*Henry Lee Tyler, "Night Horse,"  
Arapaho Chief, October 1932.*



3. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1934, reprinted in Francis Paul Prucha, ed., *Documents of United States Indian Policy* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), pp 225-228.

4. Larson, *History of Wyoming*, p. 351; W.R. Centerwall to Martin Overgaard, 14 November 1934, *Records Concerning the Wheeler-Howard Act*, National Archives, Record Group 75 (hereafter cited as RG 75, NA); Kenneth R. Philp, *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform, 1920-1954* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1977), p.139.

several weeks later that most of Wyoming's Indians had already decided against the bill. The paper revealed that the Indians had

*been free to consult their white friends regarding the proposals and have seen to it that their [white] friends have been supplied with copies of the Collier plan so that they might study out the details and be in a position to advise them regarding the outcome should they make the drastic changes proposed.<sup>5</sup>*

Other factors influenced the Indians to not accept the I.R.A. One Indian reported the tribes were being urged to reject the act by outsiders. "Also," according to William D. Boyd, "civil service employers are urging Indians not to accept the bill ...[and] the employees in the Indian Service are nearly all opposed to the plan and are quietly working against it." A highly effective propaganda campaign waged by local whites and politicians stressed the bill's alleged "communistic" features. Others argued that the Indians would lose their land allotments.<sup>6</sup>

In such an atmosphere it is hardly surprising that the Wind River tribes rejected the act. Yet, it is unfortunate that white politicians, local newspaper editors and influential citizens could not leave the Shoshones and Arapahos alone to decide whether to accept or reject the legislation. It is clear that Whites throughout the nation who lived adjacent to Indian reservations feared the I.R.A. They were wary of its land purchase program, believing quite correctly that it might threaten their interests in Indian land. Whites also feared the legislation's cultural and tribal revitalization provisions. A well-organized tribe could conceivably threaten the comfortable *status quo* which made the leasing and purchase of Indian land inexpensive. The rejection of the Wheeler-Howard Act brought sighs of relief from neighboring Whites as well as praise for the tribes' "wise" decision. As the *Wyoming State Journal* paternalistically phrased it, Collier's program was flawed and ill-suited to "Our Indians."

*It would appear that he [Collier] would return the Indian to the blanket, place him in villages, put him under a communistic plan of government and deal with him as a child and forever a ward of the government. Our Indians have advanced much in fifty years of contact with the white... They believe in education. They are beginning to see that a*

*legal marriage is far better than a custom marriage....<sup>7</sup>*

**T**he editorial concluded that the decisions to reject the I.R.A. "have been arrived at by careful consideration among themselves and by conference with white friends whom they have reason to regard as friends. No pressure has been brought."<sup>8</sup>

The reasons for rejection offered by the Shoshone Tribal Council echoed local whites' reasons for opposing the bill. It is also evident that the Wind River tribes were generally satisfied with the *status quo*. Part of the reason was that the tribes rarely, if ever, were presented with the full story of the Indian Reorganization Act's potential benefits. The Superintendent of Fort Washakie Indian School continuously lobbied against the bill. The tribal council of the Shoshones concluded: "the plan does not create or promote the individual initiative that is necessary to make our members self-reliant and self-supporting." Interestingly, the Shoshones demonstrated little interest in tribal cultural revitalization in their reasons for opposition. They believed that the net sum of Collier's plan would be to segregate Indians from Whites, thus retarding Indian socioeconomic progress.<sup>9</sup>

Wyoming Republican Congressman Vincent Carter was one of the few representatives to offer strenuous objections to the Wheeler-Howard bill from the floor of Congress. Carter clearly believed his posi-



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Vincent Carter



5. *Wyoming State Journal*, February 28, 1934. Other expressions of local white and Indian opinions regarding the Wheeler-Howard Act may be found in *State Journal* issues of March 8 and 22, April 12, and April 19, 1934.

6. William D. Boyd to John Collier, 22 March, 1934, *Records Concerning the Wheeler-Howard Act*, RG 75, NA.

7. *Wyoming State Journal*, 1 March, 1934.

8. *Ibid*. Local whites worked against tribal ratification of the IRA on other Northern Plains reservations. See Steven C. Schulte, "Indian And White Politics in the American West: Sioux and White Leadership in South Dakota, 1920-1965," (Ph.D dissertation, University of Wyoming, 1984), 87-98; see also numerous letters in *Records Concerning the Wheeler-Howard Act*, RG 75, NA.

9. "Report by Shoshone Tribal Council on Wheeler-Howard Bill," 13 April, 1934, *Records Concerning the Wheeler-Howard Act*, RG 75, NA; Loretta Fowler, *Arapahoe Politics, 1851-1978: Symbols in Crises of Authority* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), p.175; In a vote on June 15, 1935 the Arapahos again defeated the bill 238-117. By contrast, the Shoshone vote against it was 467-339. Thus, neither tribe could take advantage of the opportunity for political reorganization under the I.R.A.; W.R. Centerwall to John Collier, 18 December, 1934, *Records Concerning the Wheeler-Howard Act*, RG 75, NA.

tion translated into votes from both white and Indian Wyomingites who followed Indian affairs. Carter summarized the objections of many Wyomingites when he called the bill a "back to the blanket" scheme. "I am opposed to any measure that has a tendency to retard their [the Indians] development and advancement, and that is what this bill will do," Carter lectured.<sup>10</sup>

This prologue to post-1945 Wyoming Indian relations offers several insights into Wyoming politician/Indian relationships. Wyomingites had learned to accept their Indian neighbors by the 1930s because they no longer felt physically threatened by them. Furthermore, Whites had learned how to dominate the tribes as well as how to profit from Indian lands and re-

sources. The Wheeler-Howard bill posed a severe threat to the *status quo* and Wyomingites rallied to help convince the state's Indians that the bill would undermine their best interests. Elements of paternalism mark Wyoming politician-Indian relationships. This is somewhat ironic because politicians like Congressman Carter and Wind River area Whites gave lip service to the great Indian self-advancement that had taken place since the early reservation era. The greatest irony of all is that the I.R.A. was a bill for Indian self-government. If these white opponents of the act truly believed that the Indians had advanced so far, why did they lobby so strenuously against a bill that would have given the tribes greater self-determination and political freedom?

## INDIAN POLITICS IN A POST-WAR WORLD

Wyoming Indian politics in the post-World War II era has several important characteristics. First, it is important to recognize that some politicians had only a passing interest in Indian affairs, perhaps championing an issue if it related to the interests of white constituents. On the other hand, other politicians chose to become very active in Indian policy making on a national scale. Several Wyoming politicians made a significant impact on federal Indian policy after 1945. At that time Indian affairs no longer seemed to be a pressing political issue to Wyoming's Congressional delegation. Yet most state politicians managed to become embroiled in some aspect of Indian affairs, if for no other reason than one or two per cent of their constituents were Native Americans. With few exceptions, the primary motivation of Wyoming politicians regarding Indian issues was to garner votes, mostly votes of white constituents. Several politicians took courageous stands on issues of interest to Indians, at some risk to their standing with white voters.

To most members of Congress, Indian policy after 1945 remained solely a Western issue, an obscure field of legislation settled primarily in Congressional committee rooms. In a region and state where political party lines are at best blurred, the role of personality and experience in Indian matters is helpful in understanding the issues and stands advocated by Wyoming politicians. In general, Wyomingites emerged from World War II alienated from the federal government and tired of massive New

Deal spending. White Wyomingites generally favored reducing welfare spending, cutting governmental regulation of business and reducing taxation. Simultaneously, Wyomingites and Westerners in general emerged from the war convinced that the American way of life was the best in the world. American society had become more integrated and homogeneous than at any other time in its history. In Indian policy the question became: why should the Indian continue to receive special treatment as a ward of the federal government?<sup>11</sup>

Wyoming politicians after World War II jumped on the bandwagon of what was called the "termination movement." Termination occurred from 1945 to the 1960s when official government Indian policy advocated ending the federal trust relationship. Several factors made termination appealing to white Westerners who had little tolerance for cultures which deviated from their nar-



**Buildings at Fort Washakie,  
Wind River Reservation**

Top: shop building  
middle: former BIA Building  
bottom: Head Start Building

1986 photos by Richard Collier, SHPO

10. *Wyoming State Journal*, 28 June, 1934. The Wheeler-Howard Act was signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt June 18, 1934. Philp traces its legislative journey in *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, pp.135-160.

11. Gerald D. Nash, *The American West in the Twentieth Century: A Short History of an Urban Oasis* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1977), p.224; B. Oliver Walter, "Wyoming: Conservative and Republican -- But Not Always So," *Social Science Journal* 18 (October 1981):137; Clayton R. Koppes, "From the New Deal to Termination: Liberalism and Indian Policy, 1933-1953," *Pacific Historical Review* (November 1977): 543-566. Koppes does a particularly good job of analyzing post-World War II changes in Indian policy in light of Cold War intellectual currents.

row definition of Americanism. Termination, with its rhetoric advocating freeing the Indian from the shackles of the paternalistic Indian Bureau, appealed to a Western sense of individualism, liberty and equality. The movement's chief proponent, Utah Republican Senator Arthur V. Watkins, summarized the tenets of the termination philosophy:

*With the aim of equality before the law in mind our course should rightly be no other. Firm and constant consideration for those of Indian ancestry should lead us all to work diligently and carefully for the full realization of their national citizenship with all other Americans. Following in the footsteps of the Emancipation Proclamation...I see the following words emblazoned in letters of fire above the heads of the Indians--THESE PEOPLE SHALL BE FREE!<sup>12</sup>*

Termination also appealed to white Westerners' less altruistic senses. By removing the restrictions of the federal trust relationship it would become easier to gain access to Indian lands. The 1950s was a decade that witnessed a Western economic and population boom. Indian land again offered an outlet for economic expansion by land-hungry Westerners. In states where termination of tribal status occurred, Indians were quickly victimized. Unable to pay taxes or meet the welfare needs of their communities, they were reminded that they now had rights as citizens to dispose of their lands and resources as they wished. Once again, by purchase and trickery, Whites acquired large amounts of Indian land.<sup>13</sup>

## LESTER C. HUNT: "THE INDIAN HAS LOST HIS GLAMOUR AS A SHOWMAN"

With the notable exception of Senator Joseph C. O'Mahoney, Wyoming politicians of the 1940s and 1950s supported the termination idea. Governor Lester Hunt's viewpoint toward Indian affairs is highly representative of post-1945 Wyoming views. Af-

ter World War II the newly-appointed chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, Joseph O'Mahoney, asked his old friend and Democratic colleague Hunt to take some time and write down his views about federal Indian policy. Hunt was a conservative Democrat from a conservative state and expressed views entirely in line with those of most of his white constituents. A highly successful and able politician, he knew his political survival as a Democrat in a largely Republican state depended on how well he reflected the wishes of the people who elected him. Hunt was born in Illinois and in 1917 moved to the reservation border town of Lander after having spent many previous summers in the Cowboy State. His first contact with the Wind River tribes occurred in 1911 when he witnessed their Sun Dance. From that time forward he maintained a close association with individual Indians and Bureau of Indian Affairs officials. Hunt's views on Indian policy merit close scrutiny as they reflect the thinking of many



Steven Schulte Collection



12. Arthur V. Watkins, "Termination of Federal Supervision: The Removal of Restrictions Over Indian Property and Person," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 311 (May 1957): 55.

13. Nash, *The American West in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 213-299; Alvin Josephy, *Now That the Buffalo's Gone: A Study of Today's American Indians* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), p.132.

reservation-border Wyoming citizens about the "Indian problem."<sup>14</sup>

Hunt anticipated the arguments of the 1950s termination advocates by several years. To him the central dilemma in Indian affairs was the Indians' startling lack of progress toward civilization. The reason for it seemed clear: "keeping the Indian the ward of the government." Hunt suggested that the Bureau of Indian Affairs immediately begin withholding services to its wards and, in a time span of about ten years, entirely abolish itself. The happy result of such a policy would be that "the Indian as we know him today would soon lose his identity and would rapidly acquire the American way of living." Hunt believed, as later terminationists did, that individual states should take over many of the Bureau's functions. For example, Indian schools could be made into public schools and law enforcement functions could be transferred to the states. Finally, Hunt suggested that tribal lands could be divided among individual Indians, "giving them an outright deed without any strings whatsoever." True, he admitted, many tribesmen would immediately sell their lands to the first bidder but "that would be their bad luck, and rather than starve they would find something to do somewhere." Hunt's candid assessment of the Indian situation ended with one final plea for the government to quit making the Indian a "showman." Rather, they should make American citizens out of the Indians. Hunt believed the government had served as "wet nurse" to the Indians long enough.<sup>15</sup>

In 1948 Hunt was elected to the United States Senate, defeating conservative Republican E.V. Robertson by a sizeable margin. After several years of grappling with national problems, Hunt's perspective regarding the Indian situation had by that time changed noticeably. The movement for termination had gained momentum in the late 1940s, peaking in popularity during the mid-1950s. Conversely, Hunt's enthusiasm for a cause that he had once championed had dampened considerably. Hunt argued in 1952: "it would be folly to abruptly abolish the Bureau of Indian Affairs and give the Indians full responsibilities of citizenship." Hunt, however, believed that elimination of the Bureau could still be scheduled for fifteen or sixteen years hence. In the meantime the government's withdrawal or termination program was making, in

Hunt's words, "considerable progress in working toward full citizenship for the Indians." He argued that Wyoming's Indians might be ready for full citizenship well before some of the more poverty-stricken tribes of the nation. The Wind River tribes, according to Hunt, looked forward with anticipation to becoming full citizens. Several years in the senate provided Hunt an opportunity to familiarize himself with national Indian problems and broadened his perspective.<sup>16</sup>

The real reasons for Hunt's abrupt position change were detected in 1953. Hunt still favored, at least in principle, the termination of federal trusteeship. But he realized that termination of federal wardship would only be an additional burden upon the state's welfare and administrative machinery. The fear of losing votes in a fiscally conservative state whose people hated taxes of any sort awakened him. He did not want to be made a political scapegoat for straining the state's budget with expensive Indian problems as long as the federal government was willing to keep paying their welfare tab. In 1953 one of the legislative cornerstones of the termination movement—Public Law 280—passed Congress, allowing states to extend law enforcement jurisdiction over Indian reservations. As governor, Hunt once believed this would con-



14. Ralph Jerome Woody, "The United States Senate Career of Lester C. Hunt," (M.A. Thesis, University of Wyoming, 1964), pp. 72-78; Lester C. Hunt to Joseph C. O'Mahoney, 30 March, 1945, Box 104, *Joseph C. O'Mahoney Papers*, Western History Research Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie (hereafter cited as OM Papers, WHRC, UW. All references to the Western History Research Center will be cited as WHRC, UW).

15. All the Hunt material is from Hunt to O'Mahoney, 30 March, 1945, OM Papers, WHRC, UW.

16. Quoted material from Douglas Baldwin, "Wyoming Congressman William Henry Harrison," *Bits and Pieces* 4 (1968):9; Lester C. Hunt to Cecil A. Price, 9 December, 1952, *Lester C. Hunt Papers*, Box 13, WHRC, UW.

**Top:** Joseph O'Mahoney, 1941  
**Middle:** Lester Hunt  
**Bottom:** Edward V. Robertson

Photos from the Wyoming State Museum



William Henry Harrison



Frank Barrett

Photos from the Wyoming State Museum



17. "News Release, August 25, 1953," Box 13, *Hunt Papers*, WHRC, UW.

18. Interview with William Henry Harrison, 10 July, 1983; House Concurrent Resolution 108, 83rd Congress, 1st Session (1953); "Wyoming ...Harrison," *Bits and Pieces* 9; Vine Deloria, Jr., *Custer Died For Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (New York: Avon Books, 1969), p.67; William A. Brophy and Sophie Aberle, comp., *The Indian: America's Unfinished Business - Report of the Commission on the Rights, Liberties, and Responsibilities of the American Indian* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press), pp.22-23.

19. *Congressional Record*, 83rd Congress, 1st Session, 27 July, 1953, pp.9968-9969; for the standard study of termination see Donald L. Fixico, *Termination and Relocation: Federal Indian Policy, 1945-1960* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986); also see Larry W. Burt's *Tribalism in Crisis: Federal Indian Policy, 1953-1961* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982); Interview with William Henry Harrison, 10 July, 1983.

20. "Frank Barrett Vertical File," Historical Research Unit (HRU), Parks and Cultural Resources Division, Department of Commerce, Cheyenne, Wyoming. Dee Linford's assessment is found in Ray B. West, *Rocky Mountain Cities* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1949), pp.105-140. Barrett previously served as a Wyoming governor and U.S. representative.

stitute an important step toward ending federal trusteeship over Indian peoples. But with a reelection campaign looming in 1954, he asked the state to "look cautiously at the invitation extended by the act, for it would require additional state and local expenditures for its administration." Finally, Hunt recommended that the state totally forget Public Law 280 until Indian lands

were on the tax rolls. Thus ended Hunt's intellectual journey from rabid advocate of termination to qualified terminationist. Hunt's motivations for changing positions can be ascribed not to humanism or a concern for his many Indian friends, but rather to political pragmatism, a trait highly important for any politician's survival.<sup>17</sup>

## HARRISON AND BARRETT: TERMINATION IN ACTION

Noted Sioux author, Vine Deloria, Jr. credits Wyoming Congressman William Henry Harrison with firing "the first shot of the great twentieth century Indian war." On June 9, 1953 Harrison introduced House Concurrent Resolution 108, considered today one of the six landmarks of Indian Law. Though HCR 108 did not eventually become a statute, and was commonly referred to as the "termination resolution," it became a declaration of official government policy reversing most of the pluralistic principles of the I.R.A. Its purpose was to free Indians from federal supervision, end their wardship and make them subject to the same laws and entitled to the same rights and privileges as other citizens. Harrison recalled the days of the 83rd Congress as

*a glorious period for Republicans. It was the first Eisenhower Congress and we had a consensus not only on Capitol Hill but on the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue...the 83rd was a milestone for the passage of progressive Republican-oriented legislation.*

**H**ouse Concurrent Resolution 108 represented the culmination of the conservative Western politicians' counterattack upon New Deal Indian policy.<sup>18</sup>

The resolution was the apogee of termination sentiment, representing a close collaboration between the Eisenhower Administration and the House and Senate Indian Affairs subcommittees. Harrison's resolution, in his words, was intended "as a directive from Congress to the Bureau of Indian Affairs to start working itself out of a job – which, after all, was the original intent when the Bureau was created." Harrison, descendant of the nineteenth century Indian fighter and president of the same name, argued that rather than working toward withdrawal the Bureau had become "more complex, more expensive, and the restrictions [upon the individual Indian]

more stringent through the years." Harrison's policy declaration remained the ostensible goal of the Eisenhower Administration's Indian policy through the 1950s. The very word "termination" to Indian peoples became anathema. Termination often meant the wages Indian peoples were forced to pay to receive per capita judgments from the Indian Claims Commission that had been established in 1946. The termination legacy lives as a grim reminder of the nation's ability to revert to a unilateral Indian policy. But termination had a great appeal to Harrison, Hunt and Senator Frank Barrett. It promised political rewards by easing the tax burden; it appealed to Western politicians' sense of individualism and freedom from government paternalism; and finally and most importantly it promised easier access to Indian lands and resources.<sup>19</sup>

Frank Barrett, who served Wyoming as United States Senator from 1952 through 1958, took little interest in Indian affairs except where they touched the larger concerns of his white constituents. A lawyer from Lusk, Barrett was known as a leading Congressional spokesman for the livestock industry. As one student of Wyoming politics wrote, it is easy to compare Barrett with early day Wyoming politician Frances E. Warren. The latter was called "the most notorious special interest representative in the West." This, Dee Linford qualified, is a distinction that Warren must share with Barrett. Senator Barrett worked to liberalize trust restrictions concerning Indian lands in order to make it easier for Whites to lease or buy them.<sup>20</sup>

The best example of Barrett's involvement in Indian legislation occurred in 1956 when he co-sponsored Senate Bill 332 validating existing land titles and liberalizing future land sales on the Crow Indian Reservation of southern Montana. Barrett's interest in the bill stemmed from the fact that several large northern Wyoming ranchers

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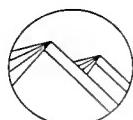
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*Joint Business Council of Shoshone and Arapaho Indians, Wind River Indian Reservation, Wyoming, 1937*



*Manville Kendrick, c. 1927*

Hoff Collection, Trail End State Historic Site, Sheridan

had land holdings on the Crow Reservation. The controversy which prompted introduction of the bill was a 1920 law restricting the amount of acreage that could be held within the reservation. During the years following 1920 the law was ignored or not enforced. However, in 1956 the law was called to the attention of the Interior Department whose solicitor ruled that the act was still operating and valid. White ranchers in violation of the law formed the Crow Reservation Association to lobby for revising the law and validating their land holdings. They also wanted to clear the way for allowing future land purchases on the reservation. Because of the involvement of large Wyoming ranchers as well as the interest of several Wyoming banks and loan associations, Barrett agreed to work for the measure.<sup>21</sup>

At first Barrett became an unofficial advisor to the landowners' association. He urged caution because of the criticism the New Dealers were throwing at the Interior Department about Indian and public land matters. During the Eisenhower Administration, liberals constantly criticized the administration for lax enforcement of land regulations. Barrett advised that Senator O'Mahoney might cooperate in the matter because one of the landowners was Manville Kendrick, son of O'Mahoney's political mentor, John Kendrick. Manville Kendrick soon contacted Barrett for assistance in the matter, explaining to Barrett that the ranchers were innocent of any wrongdoing. They were unaware "whether the limitation [on acreage] was a law of the land or merely a

Bureau of Indian Affairs ruling." Kendrick explained that following the 1920 law ranchers continued to bid on Crow lands whenever any came up for sale, and that the Secretary of the Interior always issued land patents on any successful bids. Kendrick advised repealing the law, as not only white ranchers but also an Indian rancher owned Crow land in excess of the acreage limit.<sup>22</sup>

In Congress S.B. 322 met stiff resistance. Land grabs of this type were commonplace during the 1950s. After passing the Senate the bill died on the House Calendar in mid-summer. Florida Democrat James Haley accomplished this legislative handiwork. Apparently he sensed the political machinations behind the special interest legislation. Barrett remarked to a Sheridan lawyer who served as counsel for the reservation association,

*I certainly agree with you that it is unfortunate that a fellow from Florida could exert such an influence on legislation that affected people a couple of thousand miles away from (Haley's) home.*

After all, said Barrett, Haley "knew nothing of the local situation."<sup>23</sup>

The legislative battle continued for several years. During continuing debate over the bill, the Secretary of the Interior suspended all land sales on the Crow Reservation. Later he lifted the suspension provided that 1920 restrictions would be followed. In 1957 the bill again was introduced, receiving a favorable report from the Interior Department. This prompted Secretary of the Interior Fred Seaton, a man extremely sensitive to charges of Interior Department malfeasance, to call for a re-examination of the favorable report. Such action was equivalent to a vote of no confidence in the decision of his own department. Earlier, in 1956, under extreme pressure from the Crow Reservation Association, the Crow Tribal Council went on record favoring validation of white land titles. But by 1958 the tribe reversed its earlier decision, advocating reten-



21. A.W. Lonabaugh to Joseph C. O'Mahoney, 17 January, 1956, copy in "Indian Files," *Frank Barrett Papers*, WHRC, UW.

22. Manville Kendrick to Frank Barrett, 7 February, 1956, "Indian Files," *Frank Barrett Papers*, WHRC, UW.

23. Burt, *Tribalism in Crisis*, pp.95-123; D.P.B. Marshall to Frank Barrett, 27 July, 1956; Barrett to Marshall, 30 July, 1956, "Indian Files," *Frank Barrett Papers*, WHRC, UW.

tion of the 1920 law but with a difference: stricter enforcement of its provisions. As a Sheridan resident and friend of the Crows assessed the situation,

*I do believe that the opponents of this 'last land steal from the Indians' have a point in terming it as such...while at the [Crow] agency last winter I noticed from the contracts the ridiculously low cost of leasing the land. In a sense, therefore, the white ranchers already have possession of the Indian land in many cases.*

Indian land legislation was the type of Indian issue that interested Barrett. Otherwise, he showed little concern for the welfare of Indians as tribes or individuals. The Crow bill offered a chance for Barrett to score political points with a wide variety of people. For example, the Crow Reservation Association constantly thanked him for his efforts on their behalf. In fact, letters frequently arrived from Montana saying that Barrett was more reliable than Montana's "liberal" Congressional delegation in such matters.<sup>24</sup>

## JOSEPH C. O'MAHONEY: A LIBERAL INDIAN POLICY

The diverse Wyoming political attitudes toward Native Americans seemed to coalesce in the ideas and actions of one of Wyoming's greatest and most respected politicians, Senator Joseph O'Mahoney. From 1933 to 1960 he spent only two years out of the Senate, following a narrow defeat in 1952 at the hands of Barrett. O'Mahoney played an important role in shaping the course of federal Indian policy during his many years in office. More than any Wyoming politician he used Indian issues effectively to achieve both political and personal goals. A liberal Democrat, O'Mahoney displayed a tremendous empathy for Indians as people and appreciated their unique culture -- something lacking in the policies of many of his western colleagues. While he generally supported the New Deal Indian program, O'Mahoney knew how to make it palatable to conservative Western Whites. A master politician, he was also a friend and confidant of Western termination advocates, though he rarely embraced their policies. Several examples of O'Mahoney's approach to Indian policy demonstrate his ability to capture the support of Indians and Whites alike on such is-

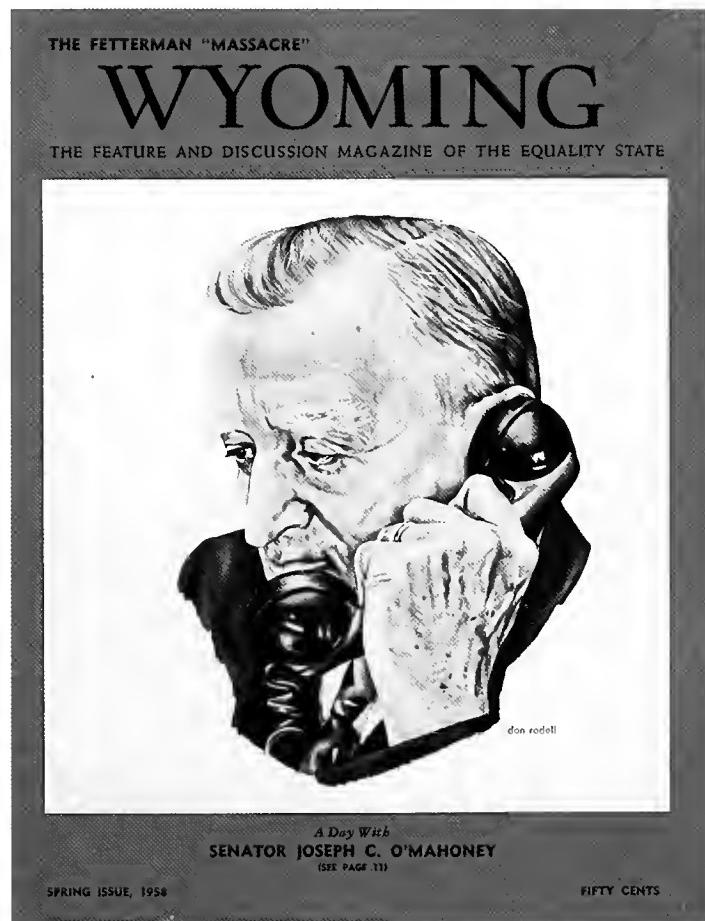
sues. O'Mahoney's sympathy for the Native American may stem from his Irish-Catholic background, making him sympathetic to the plight of other ethnic Americans.<sup>25</sup>

O'Mahoney's ability to straddle political fences allowed him to help establish the Indian Claims Commission which was created by Congress in 1946. For more than twenty years Congress wrangled with the idea of creating a board to hear Indian treaty claims and to make a final settlement on lands taken at grossly undervalued prices obtained in broken treaties. O'Mahoney became interested in the legislation when he was appointed chairman of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee in 1945. The idea of creating a commission in 1946 had diverse appeal. To those who believed that Indians had legitimate claims because of past wrongs, the proposed commission was a means of redress. Significantly, many politicians who favored termination also favored the claims commission idea because tribal



24. The quote is taken from correspondence, Jacob Brouwer to Roger Ernst, 7 May, 1958, "Indian Files," *Frank Barrett Papers*, WHRC, UW. Seaton was extremely concerned over adverse public reaction to the termination program. In 1958 he dealt termination a blow by publicly declaring that no tribe would be terminated unless their full consent had first been obtained. Theodore W. Taylor, *The States and Their Indian Citizens* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972), pp.64-65; Department of the Interior News Release, 13 November, 1957, "Indian Files," *Frank Barrett Papers* WHRC, UW.

25. Short introductions to O'Mahoney are in: Carl Moore, "Joseph Christopher O'Mahoney: A Brief Biography," *Annals of Wyoming* 14 (October 1969), 159-186; Thomas R. Ninneman, "Wyoming's Senator Joseph C. O'Mahoney," *Annals of Wyoming* 49 (Fall 1972), 193-209.



Steven Schulte Collection

"Wyoming" magazine, Spring Issue, 1958



Wyoming State Museum

l-r: unidentified, Joseph O'Mahoney,  
Lester Hunt, Tracy McCraken

legal claims represented the biggest obstacle in the path of trust severance. They favored the creation of the commission as a way of cleaning the slate of government legal and moral obligations before terminating the federal trust. Thus, congressional support for the Indian Claims Commission bill represented a strange alliance of conservative Westerners who saw it as a positive step toward termination and liberals, who desired to right past wrongs.<sup>26</sup>

**B**ecause Indian Claims Commission bills had suffered defeat so many times in the past, the framers of the 1946 bill moved carefully. While the legislation appeared to have the requisite Congressional support, the disposition of President Truman toward the bill remained a mystery. Commissioner of Indian Affairs William Brophy feared that the Bureau of the Budget or the Justice Department might recommend a presidential veto. House managers for the bill included Karl Mundt of South Dakota, Anthony Fernandez of New Mexico, Charles Robertson of North Dakota, and Henry Jackson of Washington. The Senate conferees for the legislation included O'Mahoney, Robert LaFollette, Jr. of Wisconsin, and Elmer Thomas of Oklahoma. All came from Western states or states with large Indian populations.<sup>27</sup>

O'Mahoney worked tirelessly for the bill's passage until he had Truman's word

that the bill would be signed on August 13, 1946. Advocates carefully steered away from controversial language in drafts of the legislation and, were careful to avoid giving the impression that the bill might open a pandora's box for expensive claims against the federal government. As early as February, 1946 Truman seemed to favor the bill, but in a memorandum to the Director of the Budget said he wanted to make sure "that we are not unloosening a Frankenstein." Truman seemed inclined to favor the bill by the recommendations of his Secretary of the Interior, Julius "Cap" Krug, who advised against a veto on the grounds that the bill would demonstrate America's commitment to fair dealings "toward little nations" and "strengthen our moral position in the eyes of many other minority peoples." Nevertheless, the fear of presidential veto lingered during the summer of 1946. House conferees received a cold reception from Truman, who announced that he had yet to make up his mind on the bill because he wanted to know how much the commission's awards would cost the United States.<sup>28</sup>

O'Mahoney was chosen by his colleagues to represent the Senate conferees in conference with Truman on the bill. After meeting with the president, O'Mahoney telegraphed interested parties that he was "Glad to report white House advises me Indian Claims bill will be signed next week." Apparently, O'Mahoney reassured Truman—the two men were old senatorial colleagues—that the bill would serve the interests of both the United States and the American Indians. In an interview following an impressive White House signing ceremony O'Mahoney, recognized as the leading Congressional spokesman for the bill, explained the purpose of the commission in layman's terms.

*Here we are dealing with the simple proposal to establish what will amount to a fact-finding commission, the duty of which will be to hear all outstanding Indian claims, to make a complete search for all evidence affecting them through investigation of government records and visits to Indian areas. All existing claims must be filed within five years, and after action by the commission, a report is to be filed with Congress containing a...recommendation of the commission.*



26. The only full length study of the Indian Claims Commission is Harvey D. Rosenthal, "Their Day in Court: A History of the Indian Claims Commission," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Kent State University, 1976). For analysis of Congressional motivations behind its creation see Rosenthal, pp.63-64.

27. William A. Brophy to John Provins, 8 July, 1946, Box 2, *William A. Brophy Papers*, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Missouri (hereafter cited as HST Library); Rosenthal, "Their Day in Court," pp.173-174.

28. Source of Truman quote is: Harry S. Truman to Director of the Budget, 25 February, 1946, Box 64, *Harry S. Truman Papers, Official File*, (hereafter cited as HST Papers) HST Library; Source of Krug's quote: Julius Krug to Harry S. Truman, 1 August 1946, Box 64, "Indian Claims Commission," *HST Papers, Official File*.

O'Mahoney again reassured Truman and other fiscal watchdogs that the commission would never become a Frankenstein. "If the government is dissatisfied with the recommendation," he said, "...it may appeal any case to the Court of Claims."<sup>29</sup>

In later years the commission's work proceeded slowly, and talk of ending its work flourished among Congressional conservatives who criticized it for taking too much time and money. Each time the commission suffered a Congressional attack, O'Mahoney rose to its defense. O'Mahoney, however, did not work hard on Indian issues or any other problems out of sheer philanthropic joy. He expected to receive political rewards. In 1947 when the commission of three members was being appointed, O'Mahoney expected to be able to name one of the members. When he heard that his candidate for the job, Wyoming Attorney General Louis O'Marr, would not get the desired position, the angry O'Mahoney exploded. He called the executive director of the Democratic National Committee to complain that his nominee had unjustly been ignored. Executive Director Gael Sullivan quickly contacted Truman's assistant, telling him that Senator O'Mahoney was "really hot under the collar...and that it would be a dire mistake to alienate such a powerful man." O'Mahoney's anger won the day and his nominee O'Marr, a man with few qualifications concerning Indian matters but nonetheless a loyal Democrat, replaced the person originally slated for the three man commission.<sup>30</sup>



29. Ernest L. Wilkinson to Joseph C. O'Mahoney, 1 August, 1946, Box 104, OM Papers, WHRC, UW; Joseph C. O'Mahoney to Charles E. Lane, 8 August, 1946, Box 104, OM Papers, WHRC, UW; "WOL Broadcast Interview," 14 August, 1946, Box 117, OM Papers, WHRC, UW. The bill creating the Indian Claims Commission was signed by President Harry S. Truman on August 13, 1946.

30. Gael Sullivan to George J. Schoeneman, 4 March, 1947, HST Papers, Official File, Box 64, HST Library; Joseph C. O'Mahoney to Gael Sullivan, 3 March, 1947, Box 64, HST Papers, HST Library; George J. Schoeneman to Harry S. Truman, 6 March, 1947, Box 64, HST Papers, HST Library.

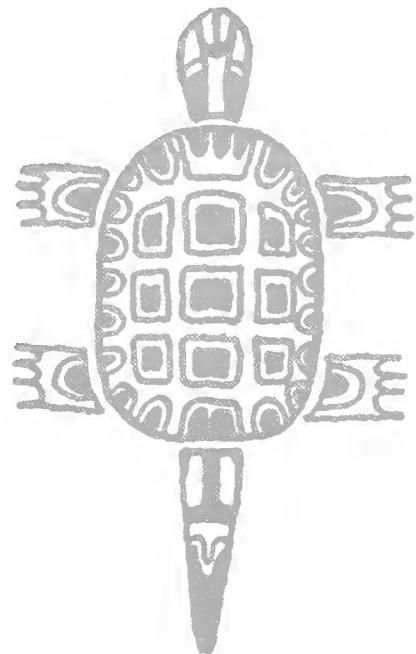
31. Joseph C. O'Mahoney to Walter Mitchell, 5 May, 1945, Box 110, OM Papers, WHRC, UW; Joseph C. O'Mahoney to F.M. Johnston, Box 125, OM Papers, WHRC, UW.

32. On the Pick-Sloan Project and its devastating effect upon the Upper Missouri River Basin Indian tribes see Michael L. Lawson, *Dammed Indians: The Pick-Sloan Plan and the Missouri River Sioux, 1944-1980* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982); Harold L. Ickes to Joseph C. O'Mahoney, 22 December, 1949 and Joseph C. O'Mahoney to Harold L. Ickes, 27 December, 1949, Box 137, OM Papers, WHRC, UW.

Another episode which offers an insight into O'Mahoney's conception of Indian affairs relates to his position on the termination issue. He served as Chairman of the Senate Indian Affairs Subcommittee at an extremely difficult time. The New Deal Indian policy was under steady attack from a growing body of termination advocates. While O'Mahoney in no way agreed with their ideas, his political instincts told him to accommodate the attacks to a certain degree. He skillfully undercut their offensive by advocating a general review of Indian policy, hoping that a thorough review of Indian administration could short circuit the termination movement. In 1948 he gave notice that he would work to block two blatantly terminationist bills: H.R. 1113 "to Emancipate United States Indians in Certain Cases," and H.R. 4725 "to Confer Jurisdiction on the Several States for Offenses Committed by or Against Indians on Indian Reservations."<sup>31</sup>

This early stand against termination marked O'Mahoney as one of the few holdovers from the Roosevelt era still willing to take a stand on the postwar offensive against the Indian New Deal. One manifestation of the terminationist land grab of the late 1940s was the Pick-Sloan Missouri River Basin reclamation project in which thousands of acres of Indian lands would be inundated by dams. Former Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, always a staunch watchdog on Indian rights, correctly sensed that the rights of Native Americans were again being trampled by the federal government. The dams would flood Indian lands without adequate compensation for the tribes affected. Writing to O'Mahoney for an explanation, Ickes lauded the senator as "an outstanding member of the Senate who has no axes to grind at the expense of the Indians, either on his own behalf or because friends have some axe to grind." O'Mahoney assured Ickes that he had fought hard to include provisions in the Garrison, North Dakota, dam bill to protect Indian rights. "I insisted that before anything was done to take the Indian lands or make their holdings untenable," O'Mahoney responded, "definite language should be written in requiring agreement."<sup>32</sup>

O'Mahoney was acclaimed by both Indians and white friends for his decisive stand in support of Indian rights in the Missouri River dam controversy. O'Mahoney's sense of justice is obvious.



**"THE INDIANS ARE WARDS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES. THEY ARE THE BENEFICIARIES OF A TREATY."**

*The Indians are wards of the government of the United States. They are the beneficiaries of a Treaty. The United States stands before the world urging justice to all people. It seems to me it cannot support a moral position upon that issue unless it deals justly with its wards, the Indians of the United States.*<sup>33</sup>

O'Mahoney, while taking an anti-termination stand, probably tempered his position because of political expediency. Clearly, he was aware that a majority of his Wyoming white constituents favored termination. As a result O'Mahoney maintained the sound and politically safe position of defending Indian treaty rights through adjudication by the Indian Claims Commission. He also argued that when termination questions arose, Indian rights should be recognized through bilateral consent agreements. For example, at the height of the termination controversy O'Mahoney went against the prevailing attitude by arguing that ending "federal guardianship in its responsibility for the welfare of Indians should not be effected before the Indians have had an opportunity...to reach as a minimum the standard of living of their non-white neighbors." He worked hard in the 83rd Congress to alter Public Law 280, the termination bill that transferred to certain states the responsibility for law enforcement on reservations. Indians greatly feared this bill, reasoning that if states took over law enforcement they would be subjected to gross local discrimination in the distribution of justice. O'Mahoney and other Congressional liberals argued that Indian consent, not just consultation, should be obtained before transferring legal jurisdiction to the states in question. The Republican Administration required only consultation with tribes, a semantic subtlety enabling terminationists to force state jurisdiction over unwilling tribes.<sup>34</sup>

If O'Mahoney's background as an ethnic American seemed to rule his overall attitude toward Indian affairs, by contrast, fellow Democrat Lester Hunt took a more jaundiced and dogmatically conservative view of the Indian situation. Undoubtedly, Hunt's lengthy residence in the reservation border town of Lander conditioned him with frontier prejudices and perhaps some negative stereotypes about Indians. Maybe the clearest statement of O'Mahoney's Indian viewpoint came near the end of his long Senatorial career in 1960. It serves as a fit-

ting rejoinder to termination advocates: "I am of the opinion, however, that nothing should be done to force Indians off the reservations against their will."<sup>35</sup>

## THE 1960s AND 1970s: NEW DIRECTIONS

American Indian policy changed drastically in the late 1960s and 1970s as Indians, like other American minority groups, demanded a greater voice in their own destinies. Likewise, Wyoming politicians sensed the change and most of them altered their views accordingly. William Henry Harrison, who introduced the termination resolution in 1953, showed no sign of wanting to renew his former crusade to liberate Indians from the federal trust. Rather, during his final terms in the House of Representatives in the 1960s, Harrison seemed content to introduce routine legislation to help increase per-capita Indian payments or sponsor bills to induce industry to establish itself on the Wind River Reservation. Wyoming Governor Stanley Hathaway (1967-1975) and Congressman Teno Roncalio (1965-67, 1971-79), on opposite sides of the political fence, offer excellent examples of how Indian politics has changed in recent years.<sup>36</sup>

**T**hough Hathaway is considered a conservative, his attitude toward Wyoming Indian people was one of the most forward looking of all state politicians. For personal reasons Hathaway manifested a great interest in the plight of the Wind River tribes. He took the traditional Republican stance that the state could be



33. O'Mahoney quoted in *Indian Truth* 22 (1945), pp.1-2, copy in OM Papers, Box 101, WHRC, UW.

34. Joseph C. O'Mahoney to Mrs. William Barnes, 7 April, 1955, Box 203, OM Papers, WHRC, UW; Joseph C. O'Mahoney to George E. Wesaw, Sr., 3 March, 1955, Box 203, OM Papers, WHRC, UW.

35. Joseph C. O'Mahoney to L.D. Guilford, April 7, 1960, Box 295, OM Papers, WHRC, UW.

36. Examples are scattered throughout the William Henry Harrison Papers, WHRC, UW.

37. Mrs. Stanley Hathaway to Cathie Windheim, 19 September, 1973, Box 94, *Stanley K. Hathaway Papers*, Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne (hereafter cited as WSA).

38. Interview. Stanley K. Hathaway by Steve Schulte 23 July 1981.

39. Interview. Stanley K. Hathaway by Steve Schulte 23 July 1981; *Casper Star-Tribune*, 30 August, 1968.

more efficient than the federal government, and attempted to show that even though Indians were federal wards they were still state citizens. Roberta Hathaway explained her husband's philosophy to a constituent: "The people living on our Wind River Reservation are citizens of the state of Wyoming and are entitled to the services of the state just as any other citizen."<sup>37</sup>

Hathaway, who was born in Nebraska but grew up in Huntley, Wyoming, never had much interest in or contact with Indian affairs before his election as governor in 1968. His interest was spurred through his wife's deep feelings for the problems of the state's tribes. To Hathaway, establishing a political relationship with the tribes took some time. He followed an excellent trail already blazed by his wife who made several trips to the reservation in order to assist the tribes in marketing their arts and crafts. Hathaway understood the Wind River Indians' instinctive mistrust of white politicians. They have good cause, Hathaway remarked, "to be wary of white politicians...there have been many people who haven't been forthright with them."<sup>38</sup>

Hathaway appointed a Governor's Indian Advisory Council in August, 1968, which became the cornerstone of his Indian policy. "You have to have a communication mechanism," Hathaway argued in defense of his council. Largely composed of Wind River Indians, the council met periodically with the governor and state officials who had frequent contact with reservation citizens. Hathaway's desire for increased state involvement ameliorated Indian fears of state discrimination which dated back at least to the termination era of the 1950s. Nevertheless, Hathaway's justification for more involvement argued that it was a "serious mistake" for the state to "sidestep its responsibilities" toward Wyoming's Indian citizens, as "they are very much a part of Wyoming's society and economy."<sup>39</sup>

Hathaway attempted to bridge the gap of Indian mistrust by presiding over council meetings between state officials and tribal representatives. "That's where the dialogue developed," he said in an interview, and where they learned how far apart the states and tribes had been in the past. Through his council Hathaway tackled such issues as promotion of tourism on the Reservation, the denial to Indians of the use of state medical facilities, and legal jurisdiction problems on the Reservation. He also worked with University President William Carlson to develop

a far-reaching scholarship policy to encourage Native American students to attend the University of Wyoming. Hathaway tried to convince Carlson to waive fees for the state's Indian population, although he recognized that the University's Board of Trustees might feel such action would demonstrate favoritism toward one minority group. But Hathaway reasoned, "I presume that other universities have considered this same problem. The Indian people are in a unique position because they were in Wyoming before the University was founded."<sup>40</sup>

While Hathaway's Indian Council did not revolutionize communication between state government and the Wind River tribes, it was considered a significant innovation that kept a vital channel of communication open at a time when federal Indian policy was under attack from Indian peoples. For example, the governor of South Dakota moved to appoint a state commission for Indian affairs but only after several years of severe Indian-white conflict had forced him to take such a step. Hathaway did not escape criticism from white Wyomingites for his seemingly sympathetic stand on Indian matters. Several times Whites believed he sympathized with the Indian activist or radical segment. Hathaway also suffered criticism for championing "Indian self-determination," the phrase which became the Indians' rallying cry against federal domination. When the Wind River tribes considered starting an Indian high school Fremont County taxpayers became alarmed and castigated the governor for his self-determination stand. Hathaway argued that the matter clearly was one which the Indians had a right to decide free from outside interference. One angry citizen accused Hathaway of "playing politics with the Indian vote." After all, the Lander resident reasoned, "this may be the fourth time the tribes have been paid for their lands...the Indians prefer to be wards of the government with all of the privileges of an American citizen – but none of the responsibilities." To such charges Hathaway typically replied

*If the majority of the residents of the Reservation desire to have their own school district, I believe they are en-*



Stanley Hathaway

Wyoming State Museum

40. Interview, Stanley K. Hathaway by Steve Schulte 23 July 1981; Stanley K. Hathaway to William D. Carlson, 24 August, 1970, Box 50, *Hathaway Papers*, WSA; Hathaway to Robert N. Harris, Sr. and Jesse Miller, 5 March, 1971, Box 50, *Hathaway Papers*, WSA.



Top to bottom:  
Teno Roncalio, 1964  
Dick Cheney  
Ed Herschler, 1984

Photos from the Wyoming State Museum

*titled to do so. In any event, I do not intend to inflict my opinions or judgment on the residents of the Reservation other than to support their right of self-determination.<sup>41</sup>*

Wyoming Congressman Teno Roncalio also advocated Indian self-determination. The five term United States Representative paid less attention than Hathaway to the Wind River tribes but worked on important national Indian legislation from the mid to late 1970s. Roncalio summarized his position on Indian policy.

*It seems to me that ours is a nation where every person can assimilate and intermingle and be treated as an equal, but also where one, who so chooses, can be different and have that difference respected. It appears to me that our Nation is great enough to be able to accommodate within our borders the semi-sovereign Indian tribes with their desire to retain their culture and their self-determination. I would hope so.<sup>42</sup>*

Roncalio believed that Indian affairs had been treated in Congress like an orphaned child, pushed from one member of that body to another. Few representatives wanted to serve on the Indian Subcommittee because of the particularly complicated legislation and slight prospect of political reward. In his final term during the 95th Congress Roncalio, generally considered a liberal Democrat in the Kennedy tradition, served as chairman of the House Indian Affairs Subcommittee. He observed that an "anti-Indian mood of disturbing proportion" clouded those years, as Congress once again seemed to be neglecting its responsibilities to the Indian people. Roncalio felt that one of his greatest accomplishments as head of the Indian Affairs Subcommittee was pushing through to law a particularly tough piece of legislation, H.R. 12533 (S.B. 1214) the Indian Child Welfare Act. Its primary Senate advocate, James Abourezk of South Dakota, remarked:

*For the past two hundred years, the children of American Indians have been the innocent victims of a cultural war waged against them by American society...Christian missionaries, Indian agents, school teachers and politicians have all argued that Indian children must be taught to be something other than Indian....*

The House bill, championed and co-sponsored by Roncalio, contained unprecedented guarantees that an Indian tribe can intervene on behalf of a child in court custody proceedings and required full recognition of tribal laws and tribal court orders in such matters. In short, the bill recognized Indian cultural integrity and the sovereignty of tribal-generated laws in matters concerning their own children.<sup>43</sup>

Wyoming politicians by the late 1970s had come full circle in their attitudes toward American Indians; from the meddling behavior of politicians who influenced the Wind River tribes to reject the Indian Reorganization Act, to the termination advocates of the 1950s, and finally to advocacy of Indian self-determination. Later Wyoming politicians, such as Congressman Dick Cheney and Senator Malcolm Wallop, also expressed commitment to the rhetoric of Indian self-determination, though Wallop believed that government paternalism caused the Indians "to become unnecessarily dependent on the tax dollar." Wyoming Governor Ed Herschler chose not to continue Hathaway's Indian Council, but made himself available for consultation whenever necessary. Herschler, like many Wyoming and Western politicians before him, believed in the eventual termination of the federal trust and the integration of Indians into the state system. To accomplish this he maintained that "friendship and trust must be established within the minds of the Indians." Herschler also sounded a typical western Indian political note by arguing that one of the greatest hindrances to Native American progress was the Bureau of Indian Affairs. It was not, he said, performing its job prop-



41. Stanley K. Hathaway to Mrs. James E. Nirider, June 26, 1972, Box 94, *Hathaway Papers*, WSA; Lloyd E. Deal to Hathaway, 9 June, 1972, Box 94 *Hathaway Papers*, WSA; Dorothy Connell to Hathaway, 13 June, 1972 and Hathaway to Connell, 26 June, 1972, Box 94, *Hathaway Papers*, WSA.

42. *Congressional Record*, 95th Congress, 2nd Session, 14 October, 1978, pp.E5738-E5740.

43. *Congressional Record*, 14 October, 1978, pp.E5738-E5740; interview with Teno Roncalio, 3 September, 1981; American Indian Lawyer Training Program, Inc., *Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978: A Law for Our Children* (Oakland: American Indian Lawyer Training Program, Inc., 1979), pp.i-ii.

44. Congressman Dick Cheney to Steven C. Schulte, 7 April, 1983; Senator Malcolm Wallop to Steven C. Schulte, 11 March, 1983; Governor Ed Herschler to Steven C. Schulte, 19 April, 1983. All letters in author's collection.

erly because of the maze of rules and regulations enforced by bureaucrats "who could care less about Indians."<sup>44</sup>

By the 1980s Wyoming politicians maintained an active interest in Indian policy and Indian affairs. But clearly, issues affecting Native Americans no longer held as much interest and importance for the state as they did earlier. Most Wyoming citizens seemed content to consider the Native American as an interesting relic from the past, though cities bordering the Wind River Reservation remain beset by the same problems of discrimination and racial tension that

characterize most Western, off-reservation towns. Since the 1930s most Wyoming politicians have reflected continuing and often prejudicial frontier attitudes toward Native Americans by supporting legislation to minimize federal restrictions on Indian life and property, making it easier for Whites to acquire and exploit Indian land. This rapaciousness has been tempered by some state politicians who have managed to overcome prejudice toward Native Americans and take political chances in order to advocate realistic and constructive programs for Indian self-determination.

STEVEN C. SCHULTE (1955-) IS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES AT MESA STATE COLLEGE IN GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO. HE TEACHES AND RESEARCHES THE AMERICAN WEST, FOCUSING UPON NATIVE AMERICANS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES.

STEVE SCHULTE WAS BORN IN MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, AND RAISED IN RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN. HE RECEIVED HIS B.S. IN HISTORY AND JOURNALISM FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-RIVER FALLS, HIS M.A. IN HISTORY FROM COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY AND HIS PH.D. IN HISTORY FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING IN 1984.

SCHULTE'S INTEREST IN NATIVE AMERICANS BEGAN AT THE AGE OF SIX WHEN HE PICKED UP ARROWHEADS AT THE "MOUND," A LOCAL RIVER FALLS LANDMARK. THAT INTEREST WAS BOLSTERED BY HIS MENTOR, JAMES T. KING, AN UNDERGRADUATE PROFESSOR. SCHULTE EVENTUALLY RECEIVED AN ASSISTANTSHIP IN HISTORY AT CSU, WHERE HE MET WYOMING HISTORIAN, PETER IVERSON, WHO INFLUENCED HIS DECISION TO ATTEND THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING.

SCHULTE'S ENVIRONMENTAL INTERESTS ARE REFLECTED IN HIS PUBLICATIONS AND WORK EXPERIENCE OUTSIDE OF ACADEME. HE HAS BEEN A NATIONAL PARK SERVICE RANGER AT MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK (COLORADO) AND A FIELD HISTORIAN FOR THE WYOMING STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE (CHEYENNE).

APART FROM THE USUAL COMMITTEE WORK AND ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES INHERENT IN A DIVISION CHAIRMAN'S POSITION, HE HAS WRITTEN PAPERS AND BOOK REVIEWS FOR VARIOUS WESTERN JOURNALS. HIS ARTICLE, "INDIANS AND POLITICIANS: THE ORIGINS OF A 'WESTERN' ATTITUDE TOWARD NATIVE AMERICANS IN WYOMING, 1867-1906" APPEARED IN THE JULY, 1981 ISSUE OF *Annals*. CURRENTLY HE IS WRITING TWO BOOKS, ONE ON MODERN SIOUX-WHITE POLITICS IN SOUTH DAKOTA AND A BIOGRAPHY OF CONGRESSMAN WAYNE ASPINALL (D) OF COLORADO.

STEVE, HIS WIFE TRACY, AND THEIR THREE CHILDREN, ANDERS, INGE AND KIRSTIN, ARE HEAVILY INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY LIFE, PARTICIPATING IN ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE MUSEUM OF WESTERN COLORADO, THE MESA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, AND GRAND JUNCTION'S YOUTH SOCCER AND LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL PROGRAMS.



Steven Schulte Collection

BOOK  
REVIEWS



B O O K  
R E V I E W S

LINCOLN HIGHWAY ASSOCIATION<sup>1</sup>

A COMPLETE OFFICIAL ROAD  
GUIDE OF THE LINCOLN  
HIGHWAY

REVIEW BY RANDALL A. WAGNER

JOHN D. McDERMOTT

DANGEROUS DUTY

A HISTORY OF FRONTIER FORTS IN  
FREMONT COUNTY, WYOMING

REVIEW BY LARRY D. BALL

DAVID M. WROBEL

THE END OF AMERICAN  
EXCEPTIONALISM

FRONTIER ANXIETY FROM THE OLD  
WEST TO THE NEW DEAL

REVIEW BY RICK EWIG

R. McGREGGOR CAWLEY

FEDERAL LAND,  
WESTERN ANGER

THE SAGEBRUSH REBELLION AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS

REVIEW BY DR. MAGGI MAIER MURDOCK

ORRIN H. BONNEY  
WITH LORRAINE G. BONNEY

THE GRAND CONTROVERSY  
THE PIONEER CLIMBS IN THE  
TETON RANGE AND THE  
CONTROVERSIAL FIRST ASCENT OF  
THE GRAND TETON

REVIEW BY MIKEL VAUSE

BARBARA LOVE AND FRANCES LOVE  
FROIDEVAUX, EDITORS

LADY'S CHOICE

ETHEL WAXHAM'S  
JOURNAL & LETTERS

and

KATHERINE HARRIS

LONG VISTAS

WOMEN AND FAMILIES ON  
COLORADO HOMESTEADS

REVIEW BY LYNNE M. GETZ

ROBERT UTLEY

THE LANCE AND THE SHIELD

THE LIFE AND TIMES  
OF SITTING BULL

REVIEW BY J. DANIEL D'ONEY

JERMY BENTON WIGHT

FREDERICK W. LANDER AND  
THE LANDER TRAIL

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THE METROPOLITAN FRONTIER

CITIES IN THE  
MODERN AMERICAN WEST

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TERRY G. JORDAN

NORTH AMERICAN CATTLE-  
RANCHING FRONTIERS  
ORIGINS, DIFFUSION AND  
DIFFERENTIATION

REVIEW BY PATRICIA ANN OWENS

TERESA JORDAN

RIDING THE WHITE  
HORSE HOME

A WESTERN FAMILY ALBUM

REVIEW BY CELESTE COLGAN

GEORGE W. HUFSMITH

THE WYOMING LYNCHING OF  
CATTLE KATE, 1889

REVIEW BY D.C. THOMPSON

T.A. LARSON

WYOMING'S WAR YEARS,  
1941-1945

REVIEW BY GERALD D. NASH

Photo opposite:

Jeanette Clark,  
Billy Walcott Residence,  
January 1943

J.E. Stimson Collection, Wyoming State Museum

This road guide, originally published by the Lincoln Highway Association in 1924, has recently been reprinted in facsimile by Patrice Press of Tucson. It was the last of a series of Lincoln Highway guides to be issued by the Association, which was founded in 1913, and is by far the most complete and interesting.

The Lincoln Highway extended approximately 3,300 miles from Times Square in New York City to San Francisco's Lincoln Park. It represents the first attempt to tie the nation together with, "...a continuous, connected, improved highway from the Atlantic to the Pacific, open to lawful traffic of all descriptions without toll charges...." It should be noted that in 1924 the phrase "improved highway" referred to any road on which some attempt had been made at grading, draining and surfacing with rock or gravel. Concrete paving was always a goal of the Association but was seldom realized, especially west of the Mississippi.

Still, the privately-sponsored Lincoln Highway was an instant success and became an object lesson for state and federal government development of public road building and maintenance programs. The Guide points out that "\$750-million will be invested in proper highway improvements" in 1924 and that half of the projects will be under the supervision of federal government engineers. Also noted is the fact that "the Federal Bureau of Public Roads has been given wide powers over the disposition of the people's money."

Shortly after the 1924 Guide was published, the Bureau of Public Roads took control of all interstate highway systems and the Lincoln Highway, as such, ceased to exist. Most of it became U.S. 30 and sections in Utah, Nevada and California were renamed U.S. 40 and 50. Thus, the Guide gives us a good look at a transition in the history of motorized transportation, as roads and highways began to serve a grow-

ing number of private and commercial American vehicles.

What the Guide does best is give us an insightful, and sometimes humorous, glimpse of long-distance automobile travel in the first quarter of the century. A lengthy chapter on transcontinental touring offers these tips:

*-West of Cheyenne, Wyoming always fill your tank at every point gasoline can be obtained, no matter how little you have used from your previous supply. This costs nothing but a little time and it may save a lot of trouble.*

*-Don't drink alkali water. Serious internal cramps result. You can quickly tell whether water is alkali or not by tasting it.*

*-Don't carry loaded firearms in the car. Nothing of this kind is in the least necessary except for sport, anyhow.*

*-Don't ford water without first wading through it.—Don't allow your canteen (west of Cheyenne, Wyo.) to be full of anything other than fresh water.*

The Guide makes many references to the conditions that changed once the Lincoln Highway left Cheyenne, but also notes that improvements were being made. "Wyoming will this year complete her entire 425-mile section of the Lincoln Way, a boulevard of red granite gravel from Cheyenne, out over the Continental Divide and across the Great Plains where, ten years ago, the chance traveler picked out any pair of ruts on the range his judgment or his fancy dictated." A chart points out that as of May 1, 1924, only 74.6 miles of the entire Lincoln Highway remains as "natural earth."

Chapters in the Guide deal with the structure, purpose and membership of the Lincoln Highway Association, the history of the overland trails that preceded the Lincoln, information on early attempts at transcontinental automobile travel, details on how the highway is

## A COMPLETE AND OFFICIAL ROAD GUIDE OF THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY *Fifth Edition*

THE COMPLETE OFFICIAL  
ROAD GUIDE  
OF

THE  
LINCOLN HIGHWAY

FIFTH EDITION

THE PATRICE PRESS  
TUCSON, ARIZONA

BY THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY  
ASSOCIATION.

TUCSON, ARIZONA: THE PATRICE  
PRESS, 1993. PHOTOGRAPHS AND  
ILLUSTRATIONS, MAPS, INDEX, FORE-  
WORD AND 540 PP.  
PAPER \$17.95



top: Lincoln Highway

state line sign

Mark Junge

middle: Lincoln Highway

concrete post marker

Mark Junge

bottom: gas pump,

Rock River, 1987

Richard Collier, SHPO

signed and marked, a discussion of the "Ideal Section" of the Lincoln in Indiana, an account of the 1919 U.S. Army convoy that traveled the length of the Lincoln, a description of western tourist attractions, and state-by-state traffic rules and regulations.

From pages 191 through 526 the Guide does, in fact, become a guidebook: a detailed state-by-state, town-by-town, mile-by-mile, description of the Lincoln Highway. It includes such things as the location of free campgrounds, the local Lincoln Highway "control" point in every town, the location of all filling stations, garages, dealerships, hotels, cafes, telephone and express companies, and water holes for both human and radiator use.

Tips on road condition and railroad grade crossings are included as well as hints about local attractions such as Cheyenne Frontier Days.

Each state is introduced by a discussion of its history, geology, economy, climate and general character. Accurate and detailed maps are included for every section of the highway and for most towns and cities. Most of the Wyoming towns or control points named still exist in some form and will be recognized by today's reader although a few, such as Archer, Carbon, Parco, Tipton and Bryan may be less familiar. Several of the Lincoln Highway waysides are listed as "stations" and the Guide points out that, "...the old Union Pacific roadbed, constructed of Sherman Hill granite, available for long distances at several points across the state, makes the construction of a perfect road possible at minimum expense."

The Lincoln Highway Association Road Guide contains 324 photographs that present a visual cross-section of American automobile transportation in the 1920's, and hundreds of advertisements for virtually every product available to the 1924 motorist. Cadillac, Ford, Chevrolet and Chrysler are there alongside Hupmobile, Jewett Six, Reo, Jordan, Packard and Rickenbacker. Auto parts, everything from frames and bodies to

piston rings, carburetors and modern disc wheels, are all listed. Campgrounds, auto camps and hotels (the Plains, the Virginian, the Ferris, the Wamsutter, the Tomahawk, the Evanston) are all promoted as are garages and service stations.

The book is well-bound under a paperback cover that is a faithful reproduction of the original leatherette cover. My copy has already seen a lot of use and abuse and shows no ill effects. I recently used it as a guide for a 650-mile motorcycle trip to the Lincoln Highway Association's annual convention in Ames, Iowa. It led me across a lot of back roads and forgotten highways in Nebraska and Iowa and made the trip interesting ...something that a blast down I-80 never is.

A publisher's foreword by Gregory M. Franzwa and a brief essay by Drake Hokanson, author of *The Lincoln Highway, Main Street Across America*, help put the 1924 Guide in perspective. The editors have avoided correcting obvious errors (the crossing of the Continental Divide is listed at both the Sherman Summit and at Creston Station) and have presented the Guide as originally printed. My only criticism is that the facsimile reproduction technique doesn't do justice to the half-tone photographs, many of which tend to lose detail in the dark areas.

RANDALL A. WAGNER

WYOMING DIRECTOR

LINCOLN HIGHWAY ASSOCIATION  
CHEYENNE

As pioneers trekked across the vast western wilderness in the nineteenth century they did not wander aimlessly. They followed main frontier thoroughfares, moving from fortified place to fortified place along well-traveled routes. Such posts could be either civilian or military installations. The occupants of wagon trains who braved the great central route to the Far West on the Overland and Oregon Trails and their branches were very fortunate. Even in such remote areas as Wyoming there were places of temporary repose. In this volume author McDermott catalogs the services provided by posts along one section of this important road during the period from 1857 to approximately 1880.

Fremont County is astride the Oregon Trail and its residents are keenly aware of trail history. In 1990 the Fremont County Historic Preservation Commission began an assessment of their nineteenth century trail sites, with a view toward assisting tourists and placing them on the National Register of Historic Places.

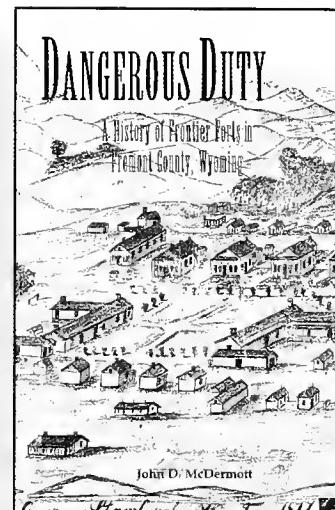
As a former historian at Fort Laramie National Historic Site and one who participated in the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, McDermott is well-qualified to perform the research. He is the author of numerous articles concerning the fur trade and the United States Army on the western frontier. Currently he is an historical consultant and resides in Sheridan, Wyoming.

At the height of overland migration in the mid-nineteenth century numerous fortified places were spaced along the trail in Fremont County, an area encompassing much of central Wyoming. McDermott divides the posts into three groups: 1) Fort Thompson (1857-58) and Fort Aspen Hut (1858); 2) three small stations -Three Crossings, Rocky Ridge and South Pass- which served to protect the transcontinental telegraph line between 1862 and 1867; and 3) forts that protected the Shoshoni and Arapaho

(Wind River) reservation, including Camp Brown (No.1, 1869-71, and No.2, 1872-1909) and Camp Stambaugh (1870-81). The author briefly describes the circumstances that led to establishment of the posts, narrates the most important Indian engagements at or near them, and provides the reasons for their abandonment. While McDermott adds nothing new to the story, he presents a lively account that tourists and other readers in the popular audience will appreciate as they search out these historic places. Chapter notes and a helpful bibliography supplement the text.

LARRY D. BALL  
PROFESSOR OF HISTORY  
ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
STATE UNIVERSITY, ARKANSAS

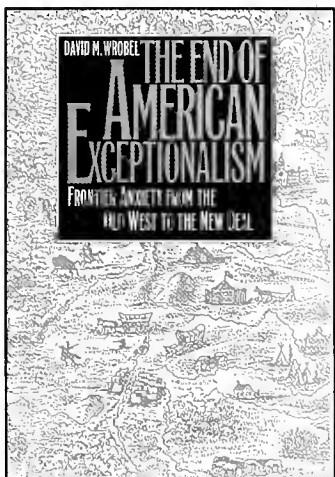
## DANGEROUS DUTY A HISTORY OF FRONTIER FORTS IN FREMONT COUNTY, WYOMING



BY JOHN D. McDERMOTT

LANDER: FREMONT COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION, 1993. 11 AND 145 PAGES. MAPS, ILLUSTRATIONS, NOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX. PAPER \$6.95

## THE END OF AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM FRONTIER ANXIETY FROM THE OLD WEST TO THE NEW DEAL



BY DAVID M. WROBEL

LAWRENCE: UNIVERSITY PRESS OF KANSAS, 1993. NOTES, SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX. X AND 233 PP. CLOTH, \$27.50

Signs of the western frontier can be seen today throughout Wyoming. Tourists are encouraged to see what America was, to experience Cheyenne Frontier Days and to visit frontier forts and frontier prisons. It is difficult, if not impossible, to separate Wyoming from the idea of the frontier, and we cannot understand the history of Wyoming if we do not understand the perception of the frontier and its significance. That is exactly what David Wrobel has done on a broader scale in his new book, *The End of American Exceptionalism*. Wrobel believes that the idea of the frontier and the anxiety aroused by its supposed closing in 1890 helped shape the nation from the nineteenth century to the New Deal and that the results can even be seen today.

"American Exceptionalism" refers to the viewpoint that the country's development, which was based upon the frontier, was unique, beneficent, and exceptional. Today that development is seen by many historians as an unheroic conquest, although it once was seen as a positive experience. It was believed that when the frontier closed, the nation's uniqueness would fade and we would have to deal with such problems as urbanization and the lack of agricultural land to feed the growing population.

Wrobel's work is an intellectual look at the frontier. His purpose is not to determine when and if the frontier closed, but how the perception of a closing frontier influenced people's thoughts. He traces ideas from 1870 to the 1930s through the works of contemporary writers, politicians, intellectuals, historians and commentators. He allows the "voices of people from the past" (p. 146) to be heard, for example, the voices of John Steinbeck, Theodore Roosevelt, Owen Wister, Frederick Jackson Turner, and even Laramie's Bill Nye, who lamented the closing of the frontier in his article, "No More Frontier."

Wrobel sees the anxiety caused by the

closing of the frontier taking shape during the 1870s and 1880s, not suddenly after the 1890 census reported the frontier officially closed. Anxiety was more acute, however, during the 1890s. Turner's famous 1893 paper on the closing of the frontier was, Wrobel states, "not just an original synthesis of the American past, but a classic expression of frontier anxiety" (p. 36). The theme of a closed frontier continued during the Progressive Era of the early 1900s even though there were still significant tracts of Western land for settlement. However, in the complex, urbanized post-frontier era there would be no more safety valve to relieve the country of growing tensions. There was class conflict and polarization of the workers, and the country needed to foster cooperation instead of frontier individualism. In this new age government needed to play an active role as the "guarantor of opportunity" (p. 84) since the frontier no longer fulfilled that function. The argument about the role of government versus that of the individual was prevalent during public policy debates in the 1930s, as well. Some believed that with the safety-valve gone, government would need to step in and compensate for its loss. Others believed the frontier would never close so long as the frontier spirit remained and that spirit would get the country through the Depression.

As he explores these periods in American history, the author looks at the solutions which arose in response to the perception of the closing of the frontier. He cites internal solutions such as irrigation which reopened the frontier; conservation to preserve our natural resources; and immigration restriction as an alternative to open immigration. The nation also looked for external solutions such as expansion to new territorial frontiers including Canada and the Philippines.

The closing of the frontier, according to Wrobel, helped create the mythic West which became part of American

culture. Frederic Remington captured the last remaining moments of the heroic, romantic frontier while "Buffalo Bill" Cody exhibited it as an entertainment spectacle. The cowboy, described by Wrobel as "a rootless vagrant" (p. 23), became the popular symbol of the frontier, replacing the noble pioneer whose roots were firmly established in the land. During the postfrontier era the country felt nostalgia for the passing of the frontier and the cowboy. "The image of the cowboy was a creation of the postfrontier mind and incidentally one that bore little resemblance to the grim realities of that character's existence" (p. 92). Popular magazines and literature of the twentieth century increasingly sold the image of the mythic frontier.

Wrobel views his work more as intellectual history than Western his-

tory, but his book nevertheless is an important contribution to the growing volume of work on the American West. His arguments are convincing. The book is well written and can be understood by both scholars and the general public. It should be read by anyone wishing to gain a better understanding of how the West has developed. Wrobel concludes by writing that frontier anxiety "may no longer exist, but the frontier mythology it spawned, the 'frontier heritage of the mind,' is still with us today and probably will be for generations to come" (p. 146).

RICK EWIG

MANAGER, REFERENCE SERVICES  
AMERICAN HERITAGE CENTER  
UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING  
LARAMIE

## FEDERAL LAND, WESTERN ANGER

THE SAGEBRUSH  
REBELLION AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS

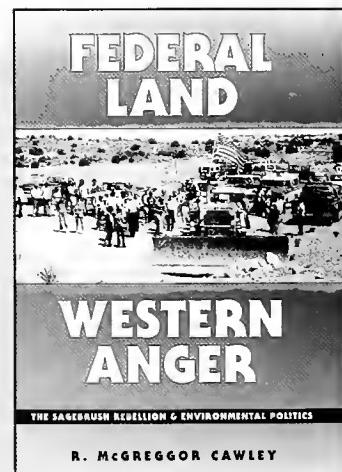
The Sagebrush Rebellion seems a distant memory to most people: the players are only vaguely remembered, the issues jumbled or forgotten. A book about the Sagebrush Rebellion thus seems to represent an odd, even anachronistic, subject at this time. R. McGregor Cawley's work entitled *Federal Land, Western Anger: The Sagebrush Rebellion and Environmental Politics* is not an anachronism, however. It helps remove the cobwebs in most of our memories which cover the episode termed the "Sagebrush Rebellion."

While this work ostensibly focuses on the Sagebrush Rebellion, it provides much more. For those unfamiliar with environmental politics it contains three important elements. First, Cawley provides definitions of terms used in environmental issues, as well as an explanation of how those terms are viewed differently by different groups and at different times. Second, Cawley provides historical perspective. Using the Sagebrush Rebellion as a vehicle he takes the reader on a historical tour of the conservation movement

which helps us understand the Sagebrush Rebellion, but which also helps us understand the broader issues of conservation, preservation and development. Third, Cawley explains why the Sagebrush Rebellion: what it was, why it happened when it did and who were the players.

For those knowledgeable about environmental politics, *Federal Land, Western Anger* provides analysis. Cawley sets the Sagebrush Rebellion into historical context, tying diverse political threads together to provide meaning for the Sagebrush Rebellion and environmental politics of the 1970s and 1980s. Thus, Cawley not only provides various perspectives on events, discussions, theories and players, he ties these perspectives into a whole and analyzes the impact of the Rebellion.

Two criticisms of this study are in order. First, at times Cawley is too precise in his narration of the Sagebrush Rebellion and environmental politics of the 1970s and 1980s. There are some

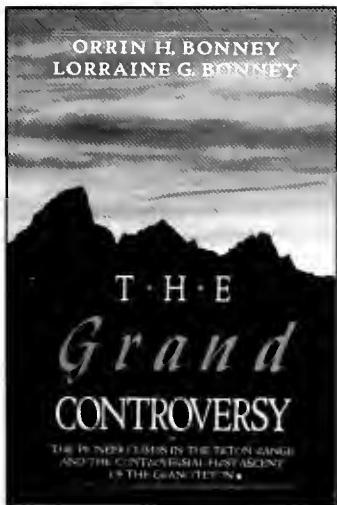


BY R. MCGREGGOR CAWLEY

LAWRENCE: UNIVERSITY PRESS OF KANSAS, 1993. ILLUSTRATIONS, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX. 168 PP. CLOTH, \$29.95

## THE GRAND CONTROVERSY

### THE PIONEER CLIMBS IN THE TETON RANGE AND THE CONTROVERSIAL FIRST ASCENT OF THE GRAND TETON



BY ORRIN H. BONNEY WITH  
LORRAINE G. BONNEY

NEW YORK: THE AAC PRESS, 1992.  
ILLUSTRATIONS, NOTES, APPENDIX,  
BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX, XVII AND 457  
PP. PAPER \$28.50.

redundancies in the discussion and at times he seems compelled to find more than one meaning for every decision or action. Second, there is little discussion of contemporary environmental politics or how the contemporary scene is affected by 1970s and 1980s policy debates and battles over political influence. Taking that final step to provide a tie to contemporary life would have finished nicely the historical analysis in this work.

However, the book does not suffer seriously from either of these drawbacks. It is well-written, well-researched and thorough. It contains historical context which enhances our understanding of the issues, motives and results of the Sagebrush Rebellion. It produces a thorough understanding not only of this phenomenon, but also of the development of environmental politics from the turn of the twentieth century through

the Reagan administration. The reader leaves the book with an understanding that the Sagebrush Rebellion and environmental decision-making went beyond simple conflict over preservation or development. In fact, the complicated set of players and perceptions that gave rise to the Rebellion fundamentally changed the political arena.

For western readers, *Federal Land, Western Anger* is a reminder of the reality of life in states with large federal holdings. It helps us understand contemporary discussions on grazing fees and why Westerners feel they are under attack from the Clinton administration.

**DR. MAGGI MAIER MURDOCK**  
PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING  
LARAMIE

Twenty-three years ago I made my first trip to Jackson, Wyoming. I'll never forget my visit to Jackson Hole Mountaineering, a little shop just opposite the southwest corner of the town square. I couldn't help but think of the history connected to that little climbing shop, enhanced as it was by the ice axe door handle and the swinging sign complete with a coil of Goldline rope. I came away with a fascination for Teton mountaineering that has lasted over twenty years and has led me to the summits of several of the Teton peaks, including the Grand. I also came away from that shop with two things: a copy of Leigh Ortenburger's *A Climber's Guide to the Tetons*, and

a souvenir poster, a free one, that carried the shop logo. The poster was on brown paper, an enlargement of an old text entitled *The Ascent of Mount Hayden*. With the text was a drawing of climbers negotiating an extremely difficult piece of mountain climbing. Curiously,

the drawing appeared to illustrate James Stevenson's description of one of the hazards he and his companions faced on the first ascent of the Grand Teton in 1872. As it turned out, the poster was a facsimile of a page from the famous June, 1873, *Scribner's* account of the ascent, and the drawing was, in fact, entitled "The Narrow Escape of Mr. Hamp."

In the mid-1970s Orrin Bonney began working on the first draft of something he loosely called 'Beginnings of Teton Climbing to 1934,' which eventually became *The Grand Controversy*. After Orrin died in 1979, Lorraine Bonney took over the task. And thank heaven she did. Because of the efforts of both Orrin and Lorraine Bonney, the American Alpine Club Press has been able to provide an excellent and very important historical work. The research is meticulous and the text is delightful reading, no small thing considering such a complex history.

I had always believed that the first ascent of the Grand Teton was

done in 1898 by William Owen, Franklin Spaulding, Frank Peterson and John Shive via the famous Owen-Spaulding Route. It pleased me that a fellow Utahan had the honor and good fortune to be the first to reach the magnificent summit of the Grand, but I must admit that I am now more than a little convinced that Owen and Spaulding were not the first men on top. The Bonneys do not believe they were, either, and it was the Bonneys' purpose to set the record straight.

The Bonneys have done a fine job of story telling, and I like Orrin Bonney's point of view. I am also glad Lorraine Bonney convinced the publishers to keep it that way. The Bonneys have done an amazing job of incorporating letters and articles to support the book's conclusions, all of which are excellent sources now made easily accessible for other scholars.

Obviously, the central purpose of *The Grand Controversy* is to deal with the first ascent controversy, but the Bonneys have also provided a strong

overview of the evolution of Teton climbing since the early climbs. Names familiar to Teton history jump off the pages of this work, names like: Fryxell, Smith, Petzold, Underhill, Exum and many others that have played important roles in the exploration and ascent of the Teton Range.

In the last paragraph Orrin Bonney states: "I dedicate this book to the deeply maligned spirits of N.P. Langford and James Stevenson. May it serve in lieu of the plaques, the honors, and recognition they were never accorded" (p. 188). I have come away with a new perspective regarding the first ascent and who should get credit for that honor. The Bonneys have made, at least for me, a very convincing argument in favor of James Stevenson and Nathaniel P. Langford.

**MIKEL VAUSE**  
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH  
WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY  
OGDEN, UTAH

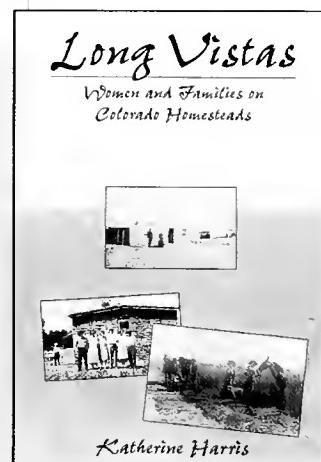
These two books are valuable additions to a growing patchwork quilt on the history of Western women. Katherine Harris' *Long Vistas*, and Ethel Waxham's journal and letters edited by her granddaughters in *Lady's Choice*, contribute something unusual to current historical discussion about women in the West. Harris suggests that homesteading on the northeastern Colorado plains was ultimately positive for the women who participated in the endeavor. Waxham's words remind us that women on the frontier had unprecedented choices to make about the direction of their lives. Taken together, these two books offer a picture of women as active and ambitious participants in the economic and social life of the West.

In *Long Vistas* Katherine Harris explores how homesteading women and their families fared in northeastern

Colorado from the 1880's to the 1920's. She argues that contrary to the usual dismal conclusions drawn about homesteading, the opportunities encountered by women outweighed the hardships. Under federal homestead legislation single women could stake out claims on public lands and become landowners in their own right. And indeed, eighteen per cent of all homesteaders in northeastern Colorado after 1900 were single women. Homesteading allowed single women to achieve a measure of economic autonomy not easily available to them otherwise. Married women, although unable to file for homesteads, participated in joint ventures of home-building, parenting, and farming with their husbands. Harris' homesteading wives did not view

## LONG VISTAS

WOMEN AND FAMILIES ON  
COLORADO HOMESTEADS



BY KATHERINE HARRIS

NIWOT: UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO PRESS, 1993. ILLUSTRATIONS, TABLES, MAPS, NOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX. XVI. AND 216 PP. CLOTH \$24.95

LADY'S CHOICE  
ETHEL WAXHAM'S JOURNAL  
& LETTERS, 1905-1910



COMPILED AND EDITED BY  
BARBARA LOVE AND  
FRANCES LOVE FROIDEVAUX

ALBUQUERQUE: UNIVERSITY OF  
NEW MEXICO PRESS, 1993.  
ILLUSTRATIONS, NOTES, INDEX. XX  
AND 394 PP. CLOTH \$29.95

themselves as lonely wretches condemned to lives of drudgery as they are so often depicted in Western literature. Using diaries and family histories, Harris shows that many women willingly took an active part in farm and household chores, and that their ambitions to succeed matched their husbands'. Single or married, these women participated in making decisions about their economic destiny.

It would be a mistake to generalize too much on the evidence of homesteaders on the northeastern Colorado plains. It is also important to recognize that much of Harris' evidence comes from the family histories and reminiscences of people who succeeded in homesteading rather than those who busted and moved on. With these limitations in mind we can, however, conclude from Harris' study

that the role of women in homesteading families changed in subtle yet significant ways. Wives continued to take primary responsibility for domestic work, but they also worked in the fields and cared for livestock. Girls often did non-traditional work under the supervision of fathers, thus learning from both male and female role models. A sense of what women were capable of doing expanded as a result of homesteading.

The life of Ethel Waxham also illustrates the wider opportunities for women in the West, while at the same time underscoring the limits they continued to face. *Lady's Choice* chronicles Waxham's experiences as a teacher in Wyoming, Wisconsin and Colorado from 1905 to 1910. A recent graduate of Wellesley College, Ethel Waxham went to live with a ranching family in Wyoming in 1905, where she taught in a one-room school. She also made the acquaintance of a bachelor sheep rancher, John G. Love, who proposed marriage. Though Waxham turned him down and left Wyoming in 1906, the persistent Love courted her through letters and visits until she finally agreed to marry

him in 1910.

Waxham's granddaughters, Barbara Love and Frances Love Froidevaux, entitled this collection *Lady's Choice* with good reason. Waxham made deliberate choices about her life. For example, she consciously sought adventure in going to an isolated ranch in Wyoming to teach. Like other college-educated women of her generation Waxham had many opportunities not previously available to women, and she understood that she had an obligation to work for social good. As a college student she worked in a New York settlement house, and after graduation she continued to correspond with classmates who devoted themselves to social work and suffrage. And yet as a woman her choices remained limited and ultimately difficult as she had to choose between teaching and marriage. She chose marriage and life as a rancher's wife in Wyoming.

Both books, each highly entertaining and delightful to read, contribute to an on-going discussion about the role of women in the West. Neither Harris' evidence nor Waxham's story reveal dramatic changes in the traditionally prescribed roles for women, and yet it is clear that these Western women increased their sense of autonomy and responsibility. Their experiences changed not only the image they had of themselves, but the perception that men had of women as well. It was men, after all, who voted to give women the right to vote in Colorado and Wyoming. Harris' observation that men knew that women were capable of responsibility and thus deserving of the vote speaks to the difference that the Western experience made for women's lives.

LYNNE M. GETZ  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF HISTORY  
APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
BOONE, NORTH CAROLINA

There are certain figures who appeal to the general public, people in whom historical fact and personal mystique are combined into an intriguing whole. Sitting Bull is one of those figures, as the large number of works devoted to him attest. Though certainly not the first examination of the Hunkpapa Lakota Sioux chief, Robert Utley's is the best in its technique, focus and style. The only work which can compare is Stanley Vestal's *Sitting Bull: Chief of the Sioux*, which is more literature than history. Vestal's original sources are valuable, especially the 1920s and 1930s oral interviews with warriors who had known Sitting Bull intimately, but Utley does more than provide a new interpretation of old material. He buttresses previous sources with detailed research of Canadian and American government documents, periodicals and personal papers.

Son of a prominent chief by the same name, Sitting Bull achieved warrior status at the early age of fourteen and became a chief at twenty-six. This rapid rise was due mainly to his observance of the four cardinal virtues for Lakota men: bravery, humility, wisdom and generosity. He stood apart in his ability to combine the qualities of a fighter, statesman and *wichasawa wakan* (holy man) and realized at an early age that, though these gifts might bring him personal glory and honor, they were also to be used for the good of his tribe. In Sitting Bull's youth this meant warfare with surrounding tribes, but as he grew older it increasingly meant the ability to maintain a united culture in the face of white soldiers, preachers and educators. Thus, Little Big Horn was not the crescendo of a life filled with conflict, but merely one part of it. Rather than submit to the white military, he and his followers sought refuge in Canada. He returned to the U.S. reluctantly, and only then after many of his followers had entered reservations and his family was starving. Sitting Bull always maintained that he came back as a ges-

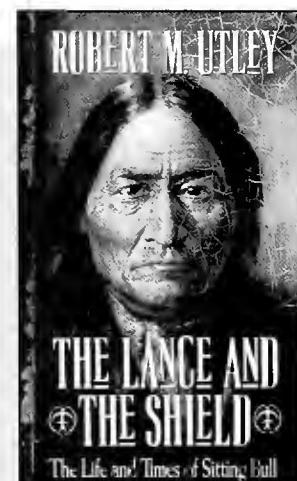
ture to his supporters, not as a personal surrender. On the reservation his life was a constant battle with the agents and his one-time supporters who had submitted to the whites. His experiences as a member of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show reveal him as a man who, though he might find white culture repugnant, was quite adept at using it for the good of his tribe. The book ends with Sitting Bull's death in 1890, when he was killed during an attempted arrest by Indian police, men who had once been his followers. Utley maintains the arrest was unjustifiable but the shooting was not premeditated.

The book's facts are sound, but its real strength lies in new interpretation. Despite the claim by some that Sitting Bull and Custer were mortal enemies, according to Utley the chief never really payed much attention to "Long Hair" and was much more concerned about "Bear Coat" Miles. Far from his portrayal in earlier works as a broken man who fought reservation whites in a futile attempt to maintain his waning power, Sitting Bull enjoyed the confidence of the majority of his people, both as a statesman and *wichaksa wakan*, until his death. Indeed, the image of a broken chief seems to have been fostered by Indian agent James McLaughlin. Unable to bring all the Lakotas under his sway and realizing in Sitting Bull a threat to his authority, McLaughlin deliberately tried to undermine Bull's public image in the hope that his loss of status would make reservation Indians more willing to listen to their agent.

Utley has written an excellent book. It is one of the few examinations of Sitting Bull from both the white and Lakota viewpoints, and also contains a description of the Hunkpapa Lakota culture. The depiction of Sitting Bull shows a man whose qualities allowed him to achieve a high status within his own tribe and maintain that status and dignity in the face of American expansion. Sitting Bull was a traditional who held

## THE LANCE AND THE SHIELD

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SITTING BULL



BY ROBERT UTLEY

NEW YORK: HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY, 1993. ILLUSTRATIONS, NOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX. XVII AND 413 PP. CLOTH, \$25.00

# Camping Out in the Yellowstone, 1882

## Mary Bradshaw Richards

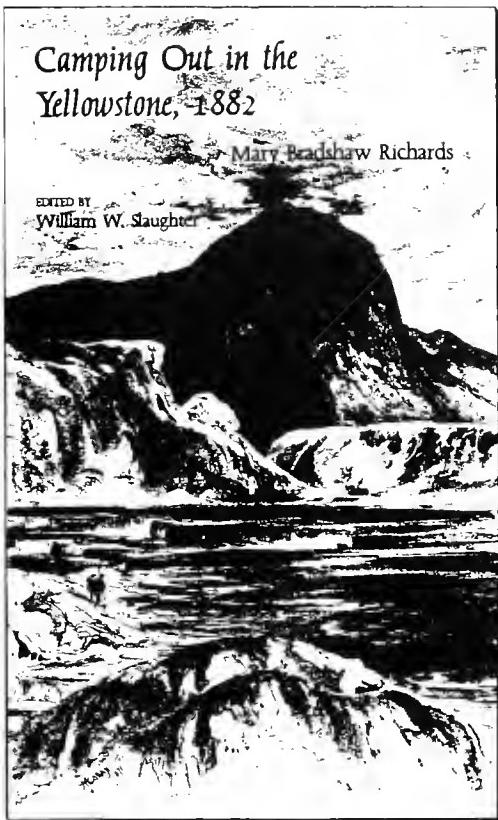
Edited by William W. Slaughter

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Edited by Donald A. Barclay,  
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strongly to the old ways, but was remarkably astute in taking things from white culture to help his people while maintaining tribal beliefs. Historically sound and pleasant to read, this book maintains the standard of excellence in Utley's earlier books and has an im-

portant place in the history of the American West.

J. DANIEL D'ONEY  
HISTORY PH.D. CANDIDATE  
ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY  
TEMPE

At last an amateur historian has stepped in to fill a void long neglected by professionals. Only a few journal articles and research papers refer to Frederick W. Lander, and the Lander Cutoff of the Oregon Trail, which crossed portions of Wyoming, Idaho, and Nevada. Though Wight's book is short, it includes new information about Lander, the history of western exploration, mid-nineteenth century politics and personalities, engineering and road construction, and Lander's service during the Civil War. The book also includes several appendices of primary source material.

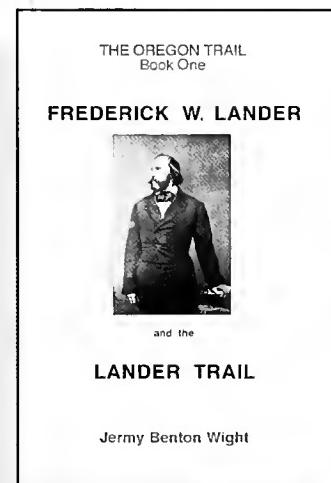
In 1857 Congress authorized the Interior Department to construct several emigrant wagon roads in western territories. Lander was a wealthy aristocrat from Massachusetts who, as chief engineer on the 1853 Northern Pacific Survey, searched for a possible railroad route to the coast. He filled the same position on the centrally located Fort Kearny, South Pass and Honey Lake Wagon Road project in 1858. Lander was appointed to replace the incompetent project superintendent. In spite of all obstacles he completed the project in 1860. His road was shorter than the old route via Fort Bridger, provided better water and forage for stock, and kept emigrants away from hostile Mormon communities. The outbreak of the Civil War and subsequent completion of the transcontinental railroad precluded the new road receiving heavy use like that on the Oregon Trail, thus decreasing its national significance.

When he sticks to his topic, Wight provides us with a useful tool. The book

is well-researched and contains a large amount of good information. Often, however, the text includes unnecessary information and observations as well as lengthy digressions on peripheral topics which interrupt the flow of the historical narrative. Chapter organization is sometimes disjointed. For example, between two chapters dealing with road construction is one describing emigrant experiences before and after construction, and on other trails. This chapter would have been more appropriate elsewhere, perhaps even as an appendix. Rigorous editing could have solved these problems and provided corrections for numerous spelling and typographical errors. Wight's editorializing is, variously, amusing ("If there was ever a man who will fry in hell at the judgement day, it will be Lansford W. Hasting," ...p.9) and annoying, such as when he discusses a proposed name change for Star Valley on the Wyoming-Idaho border. In this latter issue of questionable relevance he wastes even more time discussing his personal favorite, then concludes: "But nobody asked him"(p.78).

The book is written in a familiar style directed toward a popular, rather than professional, audience. At the end of one chapter, for example, he advises readers to examine certain appendices, closing by saying, "I will wait for you at Chapter Five"(p.51). In reference to the appendices, his sources include biographical dictionaries and encyclopedias, but these dubious documents are balanced by a number of primary documents.

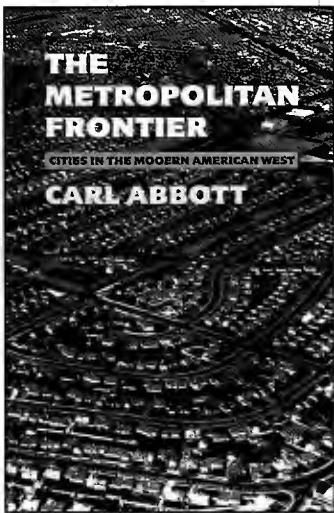
## FREDERICK W. LANDER AND THE LANDER TRAIL



BY JERMY BENTON WIGHT

BEDFORD, WYOMING: STAR VALLEY LLAMA, 1993. ILLUSTRATIONS, NOTES 102 PP. PAPER \$12.00

THE  
METROPOLITAN  
FRONTIER  
CITIES IN THE MODERN  
AMERICAN WEST



BY CARL ABBOTT

TUCSON: UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
PRESS, 1993. ILLUSTRATIONS, TABLES,  
NOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX. XXIII  
AND 244 PP. CLOTH \$29.95

In places Wight leans toward hero-worship, sprinkling liberally throughout his text terms such as "Lander the man of destiny"(p.19), and statements such as "After Lander was made they had broken the mold"(p.47). Nevertheless, Wight makes a case for Lander as a man worthy of admiration who surmounted great personal difficulties to earn the nation's respect, and then gave his life while serving as a Union general in the Civil War.

In spite of its weaknesses the book is a valuable contribution to Wyoming and Western history. It contains the most in-depth examination available

This book is the first in a series edited by Gerald D. Nash of the University of New Mexico called "The Modern American West." The editor promises further studies of twentieth-century economics, culture, politics, environment, natural resources, and urbanization. *The Metropolitan\_Frontier* is a good start, although it is not clear who was meant as audience. As a result every reader will experience a certain amount of discomfort.

Carl Abbott is a professor of urban studies and planning at Portland State University who teaches urban policies, regional planning and downtown revitalization. He is interested in economic developments and has written widely about contemporary urban issues. This volume reflects those interests within the parameters of the American West since 1940, from which time rapidly growing western cities emerged into national and global prominence. Abbott concentrates mainly upon the "big four" -Los Angeles, San Francisco, Dallas-Fort Worth and Houston- but comments extensively on other places for comparative purposes. He sees the western experience as unique where towns and cities demonstrate an openness for business,

on Lander and the road project named for him. Appendices are especially useful. Mr.Wight should be commended for undertaking "Book One," in what is evidently a planned series of volumes. I hope he intends to research and publish histories of other previously undocumented trails in the West.

**TODD R. GUENTHER**  
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT  
SOUTH PASS CITY  
STATE HISTORIC SITE  
SOUTH PASS CITY, WYOMING

people and thought.

The distinctiveness of western cities is not to be found in sprawl or automobile numbers, according to Abbott, since statistics indicate that this is a common phenomenon for cities. What is different for the West is low-rise housing, wide urban vistas, a history of annexation, strong suburban governments, and polycentric spread. The author muses, however, about the lack of recognition given to western cities by popular writers and scholars. They have preferred to follow themes of open spaces and aridity in the West rather than look at the role of western cities in culture, politics, recreation, and employment. The famous "Sagebrush Rebellion," a demand by western politicians for federal lands, for example, was resisted by western environmentalists.

Although Abbott provides much to think about, readers will feel some frustration. If you are a scholar you will be irritated by the lack of citations for many statistics and statements. Your irritation will be salved somewhat by a few endnotes and an excellent bibliographic essay. If you are not a scholar you may be excluded by the author's casual comments. Abbott writes, for example, "As far as Eugene Hollon could see a decade later, Bill-

ings was indistinguishable from Odessa or Amarillo" (p. 160). There is no explanation about Hollon and no endnote. Most western historians will recognize the name as a distinguished writer about the West, but others may not. Yet, at the same time Abbott is careful to define terms such as "regional" and "network" cities, Kondratieff waves, and Donald Meinig's use of "core," "domain," and "sphere." Urban historians and geog-

raphers probably would know these definitions; others might not. The inconsistency indicates a confusion about audience. Future volumes of the series could provide a clearer focus.

DAVID G. McCOMB  
PROFESSOR OF HISTORY  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY  
FORT COLLINS

With the insight only a geographer could offer, Terry G. Jordan, professor at the University of Texas at Austin, presents an enlightening history of cattle-ranching in North America. His expertise allows him to argue convincingly that cattle ranching on this continent was a process more complex than models suggested by Frederick Jackson Turner and more complex than explanations of environmental determinism described by Walter Prescott Webb. Jordan warns the reader "...against facile generalizations, against the assumption that a monolithic cattle-ranching frontier swept through the New World, that a single Old World prototype existed, that a particular physical environment or condition of market access housed and fostered ranching in North America" (p. 308).

The popular image of cattle-ranching encompasses herds of cattle ranging freely across the wide open spaces of the American western plains with yearly round-ups by white cowboys. This image has been perpetuated in movies and on television so that the myth has taken on a life of its own. However, the reality of this enterprise is a colorful blending of ranching and herding techniques from Europe and Africa adapted for use in a variety of North American locales.

Professor Jordan examines four regions that exported their particular methods of cattle-ranching to North America: the British highlands, Extremadura in western Spain,

Andalusia in southern Spain and tropical West Africa. African and Spanish influences spread from the Caribbean to Mexico and then northward to what would become the United States. The English herding style filtered through their North American colonies and was carried west as the young nation crossed the Appalachians, then the Mississippi and spread towards the Rockies. Each of the European regions offered something unique whether it was saddle designs, herding and feeding methods, or fencing styles. American cattle ranchers borrowed from all European models, modifying and adapting them to meet their particular geographic needs. Jordan examines these emerging American styles: the Californian, the Texan, and the midwestern.

Organized into ten chapters including an introduction to the nature of cattle-ranching and a conclusion, this volume narrates the American cattle ranching styles. Each chapter contains topographic details and explanations about native plant life and weather conditions, all of which were determining factors in the type of cattle ranching to emerge successfully region by region across North America. Enhancing this cornucopia of information are well captioned maps and black and white photographs. The author's writing style is clear and the chapters are well organized using subheadings.

## NORTH AMERICAN CATTLE-RANCHING FRONTIERS ORIGINS, DIFFUSION AND DIFFERENTIATION

### NORTH AMERICAN CATTLE-RANCHING FRONTIERS

*Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation*

Terry G. Jordan



BY TERRY G. JORDAN

ALBUQUERQUE: UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO PRESS, 1993. ILLUSTRATIONS, MAPS, NOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX. XII AND 439 PP. CLOTH \$35.00. PAPER \$17.95.

This volume, part of the "Histories of the American Frontier" series, is outstanding for its extensive bibliography. It could stand alone as a lasting contribution to the study of the American West. Scholars and lay readers alike will welcome this book and be enriched by a fresh understanding and new appreciation of North American cattle-ranching.

PATRICIA ANN OWENS  
INSTRUCTOR OF HISTORY  
WABASH VALLEY COLLEGE  
MT. CARMEL, ILLINOIS

## RIDING THE WHITE HORSE HOME

A WESTERN FAMILY ALBUM



BY TERESA JORDAN

NEW YORK: PANTHEON BOOKS, 1992.  
219 PP. CLOTH \$21.00

Most western authors regret the waning of rural economic and community life and, predictably, regret the passing of fierce pride in hard work, courage and grit. What is being mourned is the loss of those conditions that enabled pioneer families to make something of themselves on the land and to have the fellowship of good friends and neighbors. Teresa Jordan, in this important new book, goes beyond describing loss. She confronts directly the idea of loss, discovering its beginnings in legend and expectation, its growth in accommodation and denial. Ultimately, she suggests ways that the tragedy associated with loss can be somewhat redeemed.

Although *Riding the White Horse Home* can be described as a collection of lively essays about ranch life near Iron Mountain in southeastern Wyoming, it is more. It is partly a personal memoir about the Jordan family, whose roots in Wyoming began in 1886 when Teresa Jordan's great-grandfather left Maryland for opportunities in the West. It is partly a social history that describes work, gender roles, modes of behavior, and class distinctions that characterize ranch life. But it is mostly an extended meditation on a sense of place and finding and coming home.

The Jordan family members are carefully remembered as people set down in a place. Sunny, Teresa Jordan's grandfather, appears as a man of the

West who, as is common with the strong and silent, quarreled with his father and reserved mostly criticism for his son. Chain-smoking unfiltered Camels pinched between his thumb and middle finger, Sunny chuckled with delight when Larry, Teresa Jordan's father, or any of the ranch hands were stomped under a mean horse. He made sure his gruffness disguised the tenderness that Westerners are bred never to show.

Teresa Jordan's great aunt Marie is the favorite portrait. Having spoken in her own voice in Jordan's earlier work of oral histories, *Cowgirls*, Marie emerges in this work as the embodiment of commitment to land and animals. Marie's idea of heaven was seeing all of the dogs and horses she loved in life come running to greet her. She was the mainstay of her own ranch (her husband was generally travelling somewhere, making deals) and could not fathom anyone giving up on ranch life. Her days were joined by persistence and collegiality with friends (some of whom were once employees), neighbors of the Iron Mountain community and, importantly, family.

The rural economy that made ranch life viable from the end of the nineteenth century through the first half of the twentieth was based on skills connected with nature. It required men and women who could do things. Jordan analyzes that social construct and its activities. Skinning beaver, making noodles, sharpening sick-

les, performing a caesarian on a cow, making perfect pie crusts and catching bull snakes to rid the granary of mice were all necessary to the elemental world of life on the land. If men had to be rugged and skilled, women had to be constant and skilled. It was very much a mutually dependent enterprise, each ranch a community unto itself and each ranch a member of a larger community of ranch folk.

The theme of finding community and home gives a satisfying coherence to the work, however. The title's "ghost horse" appears in great aunt Marie's thoughts as a gift from her dying father which she could never have, but it is the motif the author uses as she examines ways of returning to one's fundamental being. Riding the white horse begins as a way of seeing. Marie, though nearly blind in her last years, could distinguish -better than a sighted person- bulls from boulders on the ridge. Great-grandmother Nana could pick out fossilized snails and Indian artifacts as she walked the hogbacks.

Education and reflection are also part of the route to one's inner self. In a chapter titled "How Coyote Sent the White Girl Home," Jordan thinks about her work as a scholar and writer, and ironically how it has pointed her toward a deep and rich understanding of her roots. In another chapter Jor-

dan focuses on bones, broken ones as evidence of calamities common to strenuous outdoor life, and bones as remains, reminders of life lost.

*Ranchers walk up to most bones. They look physical danger right in the eye and don't blink. But there are other bones that scare them. For my family, the pile we shied away from was grief.*

The narrative reaches its apex in the sadness associated with the devastating losses of mother, ranch, and place. But the final chapter, "My Life as a Bride," provides a classic, comedic denouement, a happy wedding attended by a wealth of friends and community well-wishers.

With the memory of her mother's encouragement in her ear ("It's all right. I've been watching you. You're getting better everyday."), young Teresa Jordan found the courage to remount the horse that threw her. In reflecting on a sense of place, author Teresa Jordan gives to her readers the means -insight, personal enrichment, knowledge, persistence- to ride the white horse home.

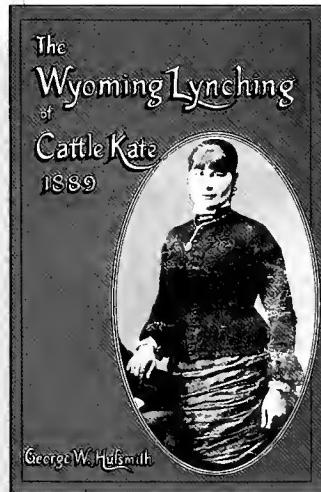
CELESTE COLGAN  
FORMER DEPUTY CHAIRMAN  
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE HUMANITIES  
CHEYENNE

Ellen Watson, who was never known as Cattle Kate until after her death, has become a mythic figure in Wyoming history. Unfortunately the myth contains rather less than the usual amount of historical fact, portraying its heroine as a brazen-voiced prostitute who traded her favors for stolen cattle with the connivance and approval of her lover, Jim Averell. In *The Wyoming Lynching of Cattle Kate. 1889*, George Hufsmith sets out to explode the myth and rehabilitate Ellen Watson's reputation. Hufsmith has done an impressive amount of re-

search, scouring courthouse records across two states and interviewing Watson family descendants extensively.

Ellen (or Ella) Watson and James Averell were lynched on July 20, 1889, by a group of local ranchers who wanted their land which, since it contained water, controlled a large section of the surrounding range. Pro-cattleman newspapers sought to justify the action by blackening the characters of the murdered couple. Other newspapers in the state, unfriendly to the cattlemen's in-

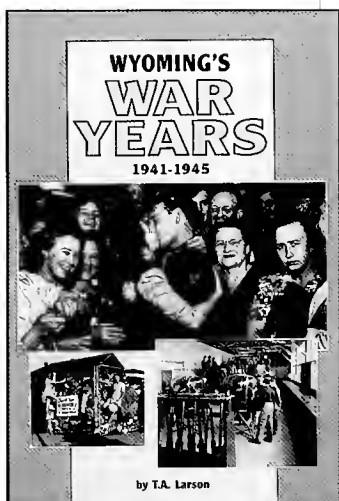
## THE WYOMING LYNCING OF CATTLE KATE, 1889



BY GEORGE W. HUFSMITH

GLENDO, WYOMING: HIGH PLAINS PRESS, 1993. ILLUSTRATIONS, NOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX. 367 PP.

## WYOMING'S WAR YEARS, 1941-1945



BY T.A. LARSON

REPRINT EDITION. RIVERTON,  
WYOMING: STATE HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY IN ASSOCIATION WITH BIG  
BEND PRESS, 1993. XI AND 400 PP.  
ILLUSTRATIONS, APPENDICES, NOTES,  
BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX. PAPER \$18.95

terests, rose to the defense, but they were nearly as harmful, merely pointing out that even if Ella was a prostitute and a rustler, it was ungentlemanly to lynch a woman.

The murderers were arrested, and some inquiry was made into the incident; but time, good lawyers and disappearing witnesses destroyed the case, and the defendants were released. Because the story of the cattle-rustling prostitute and her lover was more interesting than the facts, the Cattle Kate myth eventually became embedded in the history books and has been widely accepted ever since.

Hufsmith's exposure of the cattlemen's conspiracy is detailed and convincing. His research into the early lives of Ella Watson and James Averell puts them into context, explains their presence on the Sweetwater, and makes a strong case that they were, in fact, married. However, Hufsmith becomes so involved in the defense that he loses the neutral perspective of the historian. Too often sources are accepted or rejected according to whether or not they agree with his thesis rather than on their intrinsic merits.

This weakness would be less important if it were not for another. Hufsmith uses notes to

comment and expand on the text instead of citing the location of his sources. He refers to government and legal records in many different counties, but future historians will have to duplicate his own searches to find them again. He draws heavily on Watson family tradition. Certainly family tradition has a place in a story like this, but oral history is not always reliable. If there are written records in the family's possession, Hufsmith fails to cite them, and if they remain in private hands they may soon be lost. The result is that future historians will not be able to build from Hufsmith's research; they will have to do it over again.

To the general reader, *The Wyoming Lynching of Cattle Kate* should be both interesting and satisfying. To the serious scholar, it will be a disappointment. If the author had shifted the information buried in his notes into the text and cited the location of his sources, there is no reason why the book could not have satisfied both kinds of readers.

D. CLAUDIA THOMPSON  
SENIOR ARCHIVIST  
AMERICAN HERITAGE CENTER  
UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING  
LARAMIE, WY

This book is not a new edition to the literature about World War II, but a reprinting of a volume first published forty years ago. At that time it was one of the first efforts by a historian to chronicle the impact of the war on a single state. And since then few studies about Wyoming in World War II have appeared. Professor Larson single-handedly rescued the state's World War II history.

The book provides a thorough narrative about the war's impact on many aspects of Wyoming's life. It encompasses a full accounting of the work-

ings of the Selective Service System in the state, and how it affected Wyoming's young men. He pays attention to the workings of civil defense and problems on the home front such as rationing, bond drives and housing. Larson also surveys politics during these years and the sometimes strained relations between the state and the federal government. One-third of the work deals with the economic influence of the war. Chapters about military installations, agriculture and livestock are illuminating, as are descriptions about manufacturing, mining and oil production and industrial de-

## BOOK REVIEW

continued from previous page

velopments. In his final section Larson touches on education, evacuation of Japanese-Americans, and postwar planning.

Obviously, perspectives in the 1990s are different than they were half a century ago. A volume on the subject today might have a different focus. It would include some treatment of minorities, much more on women, and Native Americans and Asians. It prob-

ably would have more on the environmental impact of wartime activities, and it might expand discussion of cultural and intellectual trends. It probably would utilize new sources that have become available in the intervening period. Yet it is a great credit to the author that his comprehensive coverage has stood up well over the years and that he delineated so many of the major topics that needed to be considered. The

Wyoming Historical Foundation is to be commended for making this solid volume available to another generation which will read it with profit.

GERALD D. NASH  
PROFESSOR OF HISTORY  
UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO  
ALBUQUERQUE

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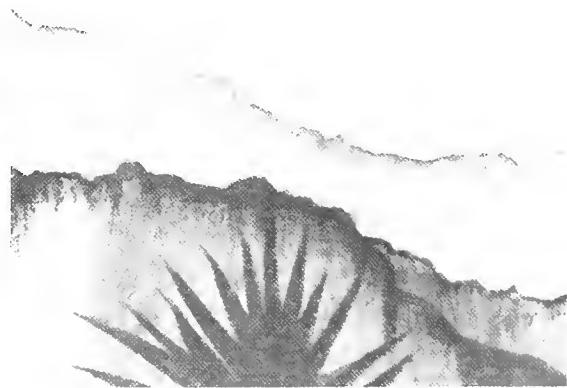
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*The American West in the Twentieth Century: A Bibliography*, edited by Richard W. Etulain. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994. viii and 456 pages. Cloth, \$60.00 Reference guide to books, essays, articles and dissertations written before late 1993 about the trans-Mississippi West.

*Cheyenne Memories of the Custer Fight: A Source Book*. By Richard G. Hardorff. Spokane: The Arthur H. Clarke Company, 1994. Illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. 200 pages. Cloth, \$32.50. Twenty-five unpublished interviews with fourteen Cheyenne who participated in the battle.

*Covered Wagon Women: Diaries and Letters from the Western Trails, 1840-1890*. 11 volumes. Edited and compiled by Kenneth L. Holmes. Spokane: The Arthur H. Clarke Company, 1994. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. 300 pages per volume. Cloth, \$35.00 each, volumes 1-10; \$40.00, volume 11. \$350.00 set. Unpublished diaries and letters of 19th century women migrating westward.

*French Fur Traders and Voyageurs in the American West: Twenty-five Biographical Sketches*. Edited by LeRoy R. Hafen. Spokane: The Arthur H. Clarke Company, 1994. Introduction, index. 350 pages. Cloth, \$26.50. Reprints from the Arthur H. Clarke 10 volume series *The Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West*.

*Hero of Beecher Island: The Life and Military Career of George A. Forsyth*. By David Dixon. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. xx and 257 pages. Cloth, \$32.50. The life and military career of General George A. Forsyth and a look at the U.S. Army during the post-Civil War years.

*Lakota and Cheyenne: Indian Views of the Great Sioux War, 1876-1877*. Edited by Jerome A. Greene. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994. Illustrations, notes, index. xxvi and 164 pages. Cloth, \$24.95. A compilation of Indian perspectives about the Great Sioux War.

*Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock: Treaty Rights and Indian Law at the End of the Nineteenth Century*. By Blue Clark. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994. Illustrations, maps. 256 pages. Cloth, \$37.50. A study of a landmark case in which the plenary power of the United States government was enunciated and the consequent effect this had on tribal lands.

*Wyoming Historical Markers At 55 MPH: A Guide to Historical Markers and Monuments On Wyoming Highways*. By Susan Carlson. Cheyenne: Beartooth Corral, 1994. Illustrations, maps, index. vi and 104 pages. Paper, \$12.00. Transcriptions of historical markers. Historical information may follow some markers.

## NOW AVAILABLE IN PAPERBACK/REPRINT...

*The Battle of Beecher Island: The Indian War of 1867-1869*. By John H. Monnet. Niwot: University Of Colorado Press, 1994. 248 pages. Paper, \$17.50. Originally published in 1992.

*Command of the Waters: Iron Triangles, Federal Water Development and Indian Water*. By Daniel McCool. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1994. 321 pages. Paper, \$16.95. Originally published in 1987.

*Cowboys of the Americas*. By Richard W. Slatta. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994. 494 pages. Paper, \$20.00. Originally published in 1990.

*Discovered Lands, Invented Pasts: Transforming Visions of the American West*. By Jules David Brown, et al. 256 pages. Paper, \$25.00. Originally published in 1992.

*Earth and Sky Visions of the Cosmos in Native American Folklore*. Edited by Ray A. Williams and Claire R. Farrer. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994. 312 pages. Paper, \$16.95. Originally published in 1992.

*Following the Guidon: Into the Indian Wars With General Chaster and the Second Cavalry*. By Elizabeth B. Custer. Introduction by Jane R. Steward, forward by Robert M. Utley. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994. xl and 341 pages. Paper, \$12.95. Originally published 1890.

*Following the Guidon: Into the Indian Wars With General Custer and the Second Cavalry*. By Elizabeth B. Custer. Introduction by Shirley A. Leckie. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994. xxxii and 346 pages. Paper, \$12.95. Originally published 1890.

*Ghost Towns of the American West*. By Robert Silverberg. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1994. Illustrations, bibliography, index. 309 pages. Paper, \$12.95. Originally published 1968.

*The Indian War of 1864*. By Captain Eugene F. Ware. Introduction by John D. McDermott. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994. xii and 483 pages. Paper, \$14.95. Originally published in 1911.

*Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith*. By Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery. 2nd Edition. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1994. Illustrations, charts, notes, bibliography, index. xxii and 394 pages. Paper, \$16.95. First published in 1984.

*The Oregon Trail*. By Francis Parkman. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994. lxxxi and 758 pages. Paper, \$22.50.

*War-Path Or Bivouac Or, The Conquest of the Sioux*. By John F. Finerty. Introduction by Oliver Knight, foreword by Charles E. Rankin. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994. Illustrations, map, appendix, index. xl and 359 pages. Paper, \$12.95. Originally published 1890.

*West From Fort Bridger: The Pioneering of the Immigrant Trails across Utah, 1846-1850*. Edited by J. Roderick Korns and Dale L. Morgan. Revised and updated by Will Bagley and Harold Schindler. Logan: Utah State University Press, 1994. xxviii and 328 pages. Cloth, \$29.95. Originally published 1951.



Wyatt Earp and the gunfight at the O.K. Corral have become ingrained in popular culture and western lore. Films such as John Sturges' *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral* and John Ford's *My Darling Clementine* and even the television series *Star Trek* repeat the myth and offer opinions on what happened that day in Tombstone, Arizona. Recently the film *Tombstone*, with its comic book approach to the story, joined the list. Now comes Kevin Costner in the epic western, *Wyatt Earp*.

Costner's Earp is a complex individual with strong notions about law and order driven into him by a stern but fair father, Gene Hackman, who is given a role with which he can do little. The young Wyatt Earp is well suited to the frontier. He is comfortable fending off villains and robbers with an aplomb beyond his years. He recognizes the violence of the West and manages to avoid it but, as depicted in a memorable scene in which he is captivated by a revolver taken from an adversary, it also fascinates him.

Kasdan's movie captures the epic west of wide vistas, frontier towns, wagon trains, railroads and shootouts. His is a motion picture of images, in which steely-eyed, mustached lawmen defend cowtown streets with sawed off shotguns. The film has the look of the West, but strangely it lacks passion. True, the central character is a cold, unyielding man whose vision of the West is black versus white, good versus evil. But the character has no depth

and therefore inspires no commitment or interest in the audience.

The only character with any spark is Doc Holliday, played with a certain degenerate cockiness by Dennis Quaid. Holliday stands out because there are no moral issues involved in his existence. He is an intriguing combination of a gentleman and a cold-blooded gunman with a death wish.

While the film keeps viewers at an emotional distance, it is still a motion picture well worth seeing. Kasdan's West is more realistic than that presented by John Ford or Howard Hawks. There is still romance but Kasdan has identified it for what it was—an illusion based on sunsets or imagery conjured up by flawed memories. In *Wyatt Earp*, the West is a place of conflict and confusion where happiness is as ephemeral as the distant clouds and as illusionary as mirages in the desert.

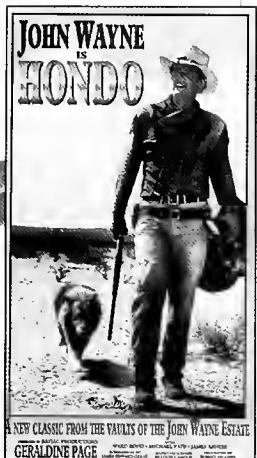
STEVEN WILSON  
FORMER DIRECTOR,  
OLD WEST MUSEUM  
CHEYENNE

## WYATT EARP



WARNER BROS., 1994  
WARNER HOME VIDEO, 1994

## HONDO



BATJAC PRODUCTIONS, INC.,  
1953  
MPI HOME VIDEO, 1994

The West and John Wayne are inextricably tied to one another. Few care that Marion Michael Morrison (John Wayne) was from Iowa. His physical presence on the screen overshadowed everything—stories, directors, actors and history. For most people, John Wayne was the West.

For much of the 1930s Wayne was locked into a long series of what is best described as "oaters," mass-produced Westerns with insubstantial or no plots, cardboard cutout characters, and Hollywood backlot scenery. The best of the old formula plots can be found in the series, "The Three Mesquiteers," in which Wayne was a regular alongside "Crash" Corrigan and various third actors. Wayne's bearing in these oaters stood out, however, and he attracted the notice of John Ford who persuaded potboiler director Raoul Walsh to cast him in his 1930 western, *The Big Trail*.

Stardom remained elusive for almost ten years until Ford cast him as the Ringo Kid in the early, definitive western, *Stagecoach* (1939). The film was significant in the genre of Hollywood films for its sharply defined, three-dimensional, western characters who were products of their environments rather than the imagination of some Hollywood writer. The plot itself was nothing unusual: a conglomeration of stars and characters, each with a separate story. It was brought to the screen earlier in *Grand Hotel* and drove off into an endless series of imitations that still appear today.

Important for Wayne was his definition of the Ringo Kid. Even if he wanted to, he could not shake the dual identity of John Wayne and the Ringo Kid for the rest of his career. In fact, Wayne fed and thrived upon it, adding new dimensions to the Kid, who was somewhere between the law and the lawless, the man who represented the illogical, disruptive force that brought civilization to the chaotic wilderness of

the West. Wayne came to represent the man of violence who, ironically, was a force for order.

It was an endless series of films which brought the "Duke"—a nickname Wayne owned before creating his acting persona—to the screen. Two of his films are the best representatives of the illogical, schizophrenic extremes of "Western Man."

One, *Hondo* (1953), nearly faded into obscurity but has been rescued and returned to the small screen via videotape. Discussed in film classes and texts on western film, *Hondo* experienced brief, meteoric success in theaters before hitting the late-night movie circuit on local television networks. A brief television series led to renewed interest, but the film dropped back into obscurity.

The second film, *The Searchers* (1956), is a John Ford classic that has never been out of fashion. It also ran the gauntlet of late night movie circuits, but was distributed on 16mm rentals before the advent of the home video market. While not a competitive video rental, it still holds its own in video sales. Something in the film continues to fascinate viewers. When I use it in my film class, the John Wayne character of Ethan Edwards—an atypical name for Wayne with an overtone recalling Ethan Allen furniture—draws an emotional response from my students.

*Hondo* is a film by John Farrow, an Australian who attended the British Royal Naval Academy and the father of Mia Farrow. In a career that began as early as 1927, he directed some exceptional films, one of which was the definitive crashed plane saga, *Five Came Back* (1939), and the horrific suspense thriller, *The Big Clock* (1948). That he could make a remarkable western film with the John Wayne persona, however, is perhaps more a tribute to Wayne's development of his own character than anything Farrow himself might have developed.

In *Hondo* Farrow gives Wayne considerable freedom to develop the char-

acter of the cavalry courier/scout who finds himself without a horse on an isolated ranch in the middle of hostile Apache territory. To Hondo, the entire environment is a threat. As he walks toward the ranch and Nancy Loe (Geraldine Fitzgerald) and her small son, he looms up out of the landscape as threatening as the dominant butte that serves as a backdrop to his character. He is every bit as suspicious looking and unyielding as the landscape: dirty, dry and bristling with thorns. Even worse, he is followed by a loyal, mangy cur with which he maintains an uneasy alliance of mutual independence. It is, in fact, the same relationship he has with the wilderness.

Hondo immediately enters into a contentious and long-running disagreement of the heart with Nancy Loe. In response to Mrs. Loe's statement about someone needing someone else, Hondo utters the words which lend distinction to one image in an endlessly mirrored series of reflections: "Yes ma'm, too bad, isn't it?" Hondo insists that Mrs. Loe needs a man to take care of her crumbly little ranch. He then proceeds to shoe the horses and carry out assorted other chores. Mrs. Loe, for her part, insists that she manages quite well with her husband off on long trips. Their roles are ironic in their poignancy and in that they provide the foundation for a future romance which does not develop fully in the film. He is the independent man who demands that she give up her independence for dependence on a man. She, on the other hand, insists on her ability to thrive independently while asserting that people really do need to depend on one another.

The film has two wild cards that move the plot forward. The first is Nancy Loe's malicious, back-shooting husband, Ed Loe (Leo Gordon) who never stays home. Not knowing of Hondo's relationship with his wife, Ed Loe tries to ambush Hondo following a barroom fight. The ambusher is instead ambushed by the Apaches. Only

after Hondo has saved his life does the ambusher try to kill him again. The second is Vittorio (Michael Pate), the proud Apache chief who enters an uncertain truce with Nancy Loe after ten year-old Johnny Loe (Lee Archer) tries to kill him. When his presence is no longer necessary to push the plot, he is quickly disposed of.

In retrospect *Hondo* should have remained on the shelves. Age has not improved the slant that Farrow put on the story. It has movement and interest but is full of uncomfortable flaws. The worst one is director Farrow's fault. Near the Loe ranch is a small river. Unfortunately, neither Farrow nor anyone else involved in making the picture seems to have been bothered by filming a river scene at three, separate and disconcertingly different locales.

The most serious fault in *Hondo* is its closure. Good films demand satisfactory wrap-up of film details. At the film's conclusion the Indians withdraw because Hondo has defeated the Chief, but it is clear that they will be back. However it provides a slight breathing space for Hondo and surviving cavalry troops to reach safety. The relationship between Hondo and Mrs. Loe is not certain, either. And the final scene is a pell-mell flight of wagons as the small party races off to the fort. Not much has been resolved.

The reissue of *Hondo* on video comes from the Wayne estate, the BatJac Corporation. Whoever mastered this copy ought to be shot. The fades to black are poor and uneven, some blacks lasting an unsettling four seconds. The sound is choppy with cuts of music beginning several notes into a bar.

Unlike *Hondo*, John Ford's movie *The Searchers* maintains the quality of images and characters. In it John Wayne's Ethan Edwards character displays a sinister twist to his independence. Edwards is at the borderline between the law and lawlessness, civiliza-

## THE SEARCHERS



C.V. WHITNEY PICTURES, 1956  
WARNER HOME VIDEO, INC.,  
1990

tion and wilderness. In fact, the film opens, literally, with an open door to the bright light of wilderness and Edwards in the distance. The film ends on the same note with Edwards at the border of the open doorway. He turns back to the wilderness from which he came and the door is shut. Here the independence and even uncivilized violence of the principal character is necessary for a return to order and control, what most people call civilization. On one level the film is about the encroachment of civilization upon the violent ways of the wilderness, just as in *Shane* the civilizing influence of farmers pushes the recklessness of the saloon up against the wilderness of the Tetons. In short, the wilderness could not be settled without independent people like Hondo, Ethan Edwards, and Shane. But the message is always clear at the end: civilization has no place for them once peace has been restored. Ethan Edwards is shut out from a civilized existence, and Shane rides, wounded and bleeding, back up into the mountains.

In *The Searchers* a homestead belonging to Ethan Edwards' brother is attacked by Comanche Indians under the leadership of the chief "Scar" (Harry Brandon). Everyone on the homestead is killed except adopted son Martin Pawley (Jeffrey Hunter), who was with Ethan at the time, and the Edwards' daughter Debbie Edwards (Natalie Wood). Assuming that the girl

was taken by Scar for adoption and eventual marriage, Ethan Edwards begins a long seven-year search for the girl. His quest is just as much for revenge as it is to kill his niece, for Edwards is an Indian-hater first class. Having learned their ways he uses their methods to destroy them. The abduction of his niece means that part of him will become an Indian, and the thought of the wilderness winning is intolerable for him.

The Indians in both films represent disorder and chaos, the wilderness incarnate, and diametrically opposed to civilization. The Indians survived with the land and adapted to it. Civilization, on the other hand, shaped the wilderness into its own image. Thus, the Indians –particularly for films of the 50s– were at once savage and noble, just as the wilderness was at once uncompromising yet beautiful. Both ultimately have their ways which are mysterious to the white man (i.e., civilization). Thus, it was inevitable that, as civilization moved forward into the wilderness, it would lose some of its soldiers to seductive savagery.

An interesting facet of both films is the appearance of Ward Bond, a perennial favorite of John Ford. In *Hondo* Bond plays Hondo's friend, the wizened "Buffalo." In *The Searchers* Bond plays the dualistic Captain and Reverend Samuel Clayton. A minor character stooped with age in *Hondo*, Bond in *The Searchers* is a tall, erect, young figure who maintains an uneasy alliance with Ethan

Edwards. His role speaks directly to the theme of the film. Clayton represents two forces of civilization: the Texas Rangers (order) and Christianity (spiritual). In the person of Ward Bond both stand mightily for forward movement, and both are hampered by a sense of fairness that the wilderness does not understand. Therefore, Clayton, the man who represents both the social and spiritual needs of society, needs Ethan Edwards even though each is a threat to the other. In fact, throughout the film, the two men continually toss objects back and forth as if to exorcize the tension between them.

One last note: Wayne wears the same type of hat in most of his films. It is the one he wears in *Hondo*, light colored and short-brimmed. The hat he wears in *The Searchers* is dramatically different; it is black and broad-brimmed. In fact, it is so broad-brimmed that it often shades his face, hiding features that are ordinarily well-lit for the scrutiny and trust of the characters around him as well as of the audience. Thus, in one stroke Ethan Edwards is less John Wayne and more the unknown quantity.

ROGER TAYLOR, JR.  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH  
WESTERN WYOMING COLLEGE  
ROCK SPRINGS

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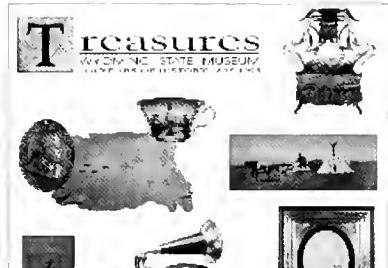
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W Y O M I N G  
**ANNALS**



Winter '94-'95  
Volume 66, No. 4

## EDITOR NOTES

I'll bet you didn't know Wyoming had a *State Historian*. Or a *State Archivist*. Or a *State Librarian*. Or a *State Museum Curator*. Even if you work in the executive branch of state government, I'll bet you didn't know that those titles existed or what they imply. Myself, I'm especially curious about the *State Historian*. I guess my curiosity was piqued when the Wyoming State Museum began celebrating its 100-year history. That's because the person who probably deserved the title of *State Historian* was collecting history when artifacts began accumulating in the Museum (1871), even though *State Historian* was not written into Wyoming statute until later. (1919, Fifteenth State Legislature).

What is the *State Historian*, anyway? Does he guard and dispense Wyoming history? Is his job—a la Gene Gressley (former Director of the American Heritage Center), whose interview appears in this issue of *Annals*—to collect documents? Or is he a peculiar type of person? Perhaps an idiot savant with a photographic memory? Somebody you'd want to help you count cards in Las Vegas? If so, a good candidate would be 97 year-old Ralph McWhinnie (the legendary registrar who, it was said, could remember the name of every student who matriculated at the University of Wyoming during his 65 year career; by the way, Ralph still has his own office at UW). Maybe people perceive the *State Historian* as a friendly soul like the scarecrow (Ray Bolger) in the *Wizard of Oz* who, after receiving his certificate of intelligence from the wizard (Frank Morgan) in the palace in Emerald City, began spouting geographic data and Einstein's theory of relativity ( $E=MC^2$ ). Is the *State Historian* obligated to remember everything that ever occurred in Wyoming? If he doesn't remember every obscure fact, should he bear the opprobrium of not knowing? Is he obligated to endure the snide remark of some niggling researcher: "Surely you know the name of the Governor who served in 1919. You are the *State Historian*, are you not?" (There were two: Frank Houx and Robert D. Carey).

There shall be no excuses. On record is a full listing of *State Historian* duties (*Annals of Wyoming*, October, 1930). Among other obligations, he or she shall "travel from place to place, as the requirements of the work may dictate," in order to collect, compile, file and publish materials relevant to state history, procure narratives from pioneers, and to "collect by solicitation or purchase fossils, specimens, of ores and minerals, objects of curiosity connected with the history of the State and all such books, maps, writings, charts and other material as will tend to facilitate historical, scientific and antiquarian research." Actually, it does sort of read like a Gene Gressley job description.

Does the title of *State Historian* carry with it any special

privileges? With absolutely no research I found that the title plus a nickel, will get you a cup of coffee (only at Wall Drug in South Dakota). However, it did take a little research to learn that it's erroneous to use the pronoun "he" exclusively when referring to the *State Historian*. That's because all of the *State Historians* from 1919 until 1965 were women (list available on demand). In fact, if you go further back, when the *State Librarian* was doing the work of the *State Historian*—clear back to territorial days when E.P. Johnson became the first *Librarian* (1873)—only three men occupied the position (E.P. Johnson, John Slaughter, C.G. Coutant). Why? Probably because the job of *State Historian* involved negligible compensation. Women, after all, were supposed to be tending to their

knitting, raising their families, and doing community service work while their husbands were acting as breadwinners. No one could reasonably expect that the job of *State Historian* was valuable enough to deserve a living wage. Women were the only ones who could afford to accept the title.

Nevertheless, if you know anything at all about the women who served as *State Historian* you know they took the responsibility seriously. Even as they described the exploits of pioneers, these women were involved in their own pioneering work, contributing to the preservation and development of Wyoming history. Agnes Wright Spring (1917-1921), who was the only person to hold the title of *State Historian* in two states (Wyoming and Colorado), authored 23 books and 600 articles and, incidentally,

won the Wyoming Women's Golf Championship (1916). Lola Homsher worked as a historian for the Wyoming State Historical Department for 25 years (1951-1965). She also was its first director. Homsher founded the Wyoming Historical Society (1953), endowing it with a \$100,000 trust fund before she died (1986). Katherine Halverson, never given the title of *State Historian* although she did the work, was Editor of *Wyoming Annals* for fifteen years (1965 to 1980). These people were serious about their jobs even if their titles didn't privilege them to front row seats at concerts (Cheyenne Symphony) and sporting events (Cowboy basketball, football).

If Wyomingites still think history is important, maybe we ought to give more serious thought to the position of *State Historian*. On the other hand, that could mean the death knell for the position, particularly now when government is under scrutiny, when consideration for historical resources is not foremost on government's agenda, and at a time when major cultural resource agencies (NEA, NEH, Corporation for Public Broadcasting) are experiencing a frontal assault. But why should I care? Furthermore, how do I know all these so-called "facts?" I guess because I have a personal interest (I am the *State Historian*). -- MJ



Lola Homsher, 1950

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Winter 1994-1995  
Volume 66, No. 4

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# WHAT'S NEW ABOUT THE NEW WESTERN HISTORY?



BY  
SHERRY SMITH

FRANKLIN M. SNOZ, JR., UTEP

**A** few years ago something fairly unusual happened. *The New York Times* published an article on a debate dividing historians of the American West. *The Times'* attention was unusual for two reasons: Western history rarely warrants much Eastern attention and academic issues seldom inspire much excitement beyond the halls of ivy. Evidently editors decided, however, that the New Western History warranted some scrutiny. Ever since, all kinds of non-academic publications—even *People Magazine*—have devoted space to a most unglamorous, unsensational topic: how academic historians are scrapping sacred American myths about the Old West, or as the *New York Times* put it, how "historians are badmouthing the American frontier".<sup>1</sup>

What is the "New Western History"? Is it really "new"? Why does it elicit such interest and arouse rage? Finally, why should *Annals* readers give a hoot about any of this?

In a nutshell, New Western Historians define the West as a region or place and discard Frederick Jackson Turner's 1893 emphasis on the frontier as a process. They emphasize relationships among diverse ethnic groups and economic interests. They discuss interactions between men and women. They examine the impact of humans on the natural environment. Finally, New Western Historians call for studies which examine twentieth century

developments and which de-emphasize the importance of western myth. They don't deny the validity of myth as a legitimate area of study, but their scholarship doesn't demonstrate much enthusiasm for it.

Turner, the founding father of Western History, believed that the westward movement across the continent was the defining national experience, one which left its imprint on both national character and institutions. One major problem with Turner's thesis, according to New Western Historians, is its hopeless ethnocentrism. It slights, when it does not completely ignore, the experiences of Indians, Mexicans, Asians, and women. It promotes a triumphal story of progress which belies the West's complexities. Finally, it ends the story at 1890 when the Census Bureau announced there was no longer a distinguishable frontier, and thus denies the West a twentieth century history.

For these reasons and others, then, New Western Historians abandon the frontier concept and define the West as a distinctive place, although its exact boundaries remain debatable, particularly the eastern edge. Does the West begin at the Mississippi River? The 100th meridian? Richard White's *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own*, the best synthesis of New Western History scholarship, argues that the region's distinction is based not on precise geographical boundaries or environmental factors, but on an assortment of relationships that set it apart from any other section of the country.<sup>2</sup>

Especially important is the region's relationship with the federal government. From the beginning of United States jurisdiction the federal government has promoted some westerners' economic interests and hindered others, dictated policy regarding land use and natural resources, and poured national taxpayers' money into regional devel-

opment projects. This is a scenario Wyoming residents will recognize. Long before 1990's arguments over "big government," Newt Gingrich, and the Republicans' "Contract With America," westerners understood the problem of government intrusion into their lives. Yet westerners have also benefited from federal investment in their region. The result historically has been a schizophrenic regional reaction to government: love it when it provides money, resent it when it taxes to pay for the projects and wants to exercise control over its expenditures.

New Western Historians also emphasize the relationships among various ethnic groups in the West. They don't just focus on Anglo-American male experiences. Certainly race and ethnicity have proved crucial in all corners of the country, but the New Western History underscores the significance of relationships between Anglo-Americans on the one hand, and Mexicans, Asians, Indians and to a lesser extent African Americans on the other. It also incorporates women's experiences. Adding these long-overlooked peoples into the story decidedly alters the tone. More often than not, the minorities experienced loss of power, land and autonomy. Women's fates proved more complicated, although generally women of color fared poorly. Historically, as White puts it, these groups have been the losers.

So is any of this "new"? Yes and no. Certainly the media attention garnered by some scholars is new. It represents the determination and skill of some academics to attract such attention.<sup>3</sup> But their purpose is less to feed the historians' hunger for publicity than it is to reach a broader audience, get more members of the general public to think analytically about the past, and reach beyond the ivory tower. Admirable goals! Moreover, the

phrase "New Western History" signals recent efforts to synthesize scholarship produced since the 1960's.

White's book reflects the work not of just one historian or even the handful of scholars whose names keep popping up in the popular media. Rather, it is a distillation of about thirty years' worth of work, the toil of dozens of historians who have attempted to answer the questions that have interested the nation as a whole since the 1960s: who does exercise economic and political power? Who benefits from political decisions and who loses? How does inclusion of Indians, Mexicans, Asians and women alter our understanding of the past? What are the environmental consequences of development and growth? These questions and historians' answers to them do not reflect the agenda of one group. They represent the interests and concerns of many individuals and groups during the last thirty to forty years of the twentieth century. In that respect then, New Western History scholarship is not new.

So why all the controversy? Some historians object to discarding the "frontier" process as an analytical tool, arguing that the concept still has validity. This debate has been spirited and healthy. Other critics of the New Western History, however, claim the new historiography reflects the political point of view of "Sixties," anti-Vietnam War, counter-culture types who emphasize the negative. This criticism is absurd. The books listed in White's bibliography, for example, represent the work of at least several generations of scholars, individuals who most assuredly do not all share the same political inclinations. To suggest their work is politically-motivated, knee-jerk liberalism or even radicalism is insulting. This large body of work represents the careful labor of professionals who represent an increasingly diverse collection of scholars, people of both genders and various ethnicities



MEYERS COLLECTION, WYOMING STATE MUSEUM

Duesse DeMandge, n.d. Dozens of photographic images of Black Americans exist in the Meyers Collection of the Wyoming State Museum.

and political persuasions.

Moreover, this scholarship does not address only issues of ethnicity or gender. White and his contemporaries conclude that Indians and other minorities are not the only ones to see their power ebb. Rural westerners, particularly those engaged in farming and ranching, have also lost economic and political power. The twentieth century West is a complicated world where ranchers are feeling

1. Richard Bernstein, "Unsettling the Old West," *New York Times Magazine*, 18 March 1990, p.34.

2. Richard White, *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own: A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

3. Patricia Nelson Limerick, author of *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1987) stands out as a particularly effective spokesperson for the New Western History and is often featured in print media stories. For a criticism of the "Limerickian press agency," see William H. Goetzmann, "Crisis of the New—West?", *Continuity: A Journal of History* no.17 (Fall, 1993): 29.

4. See Peter Iverson, *When Indians Became Cowboys: Native Peoples and Cattle Ranching in the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 182-224.

5. For criticisms of the New Western History see "Symposium: The New Western History," *Continuity: A Journal of History* (Fall 1993): 1-32; *Trails: Toward a New Western History* ed. by Patricia Nelson Limerick, Clyde A. Milner II, and Charles E. Rankin (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991), 89-102; and Gene Gressley, ed., *Old West/New West: Quo Vadis?* (Worland, Wyoming: High Plains Publishing Company, 1994).

as embattled today as Indians felt one hundred years ago.<sup>4</sup>

It is noteworthy that critics never take issue with the conclusions of the New Western Historians regarding Indians, for example. Complaints focus not on facts or even interpretation but on emphasis. Why spend so much time on the "losers"?<sup>5</sup> It is possible that the new synthesis overcompensates for past omissions, which were glaring, but such complaints might fall upon more sympathetic ears had the complainants been as vigilant about "balance" and "equal time" when so many other groups were systematically ignored in past versions of American and Western History.

There is no doubt, however, that recent historiographical trends represent efforts to fill in the blanks and to address previously ignored elements of the story. Historians have been

drawn to these stories because they were fresh, unexplored, interesting and relevant to contemporary concerns. Attempting a clear-eyed view of America's past, one that is inclusive of all groups and interests, is not negative but will prove in the long term to be a most positive development. In the process some topics probably will be slighted because they are neither new nor trendy. We have not reached "balance" yet. That goal may prove elusive and, besides, will we even be able to agree on a definition of "balance"? Yet it does seem that New Western Historians are closer to that goal than historians were thirty years ago.

We live in contentious times. Not the least of our contentions is deciding how we tell our stories about the past, whose voices are heard, and how much space each group will be accorded in textbooks. Who gets to make these choices and decisions? Who gets to shape the sense of our collective past and, not coincidentally, of ourselves?

Readers of *Annals* need to be informed about the New Western History and

continued page 77...



# In Old Wyoming

by Larry K. Brown

He Chronicled Cheyenne for 50 Years with his Camera

## "One-Shot" Brammar

Like "Chicken Man," radio hero of yesteryear, he was "Everywhere! Everywhere!" It is difficult to find anyone who was at least twenty years old in the late 1970s who does not remember the gaunt, gangling "Bram"—wild, white hair weathervaning in the wind as he luggered his camera down the street enroute to a shoot. Others recall his daily treks, sans coat and hat, to the Mayflower Cafe where, like a winter-worn cornstalk, he slouched over tea and toast. Despite his celebrity, however, even those who claim friendship acknowledge that they never really knew him.<sup>1</sup>

What they do know is that for nearly a half century photographer Francis S. Brammar, like the legendary Tom Swift and his Wizard Camera, trapped the images of Cheyenne within his magic box. Presidents and generals ...pinup beauties and cow-pokes ...socialites and clerks ...kids with their pets. Their smiles and warts were frozen by his lens. His finest work also caught their spirit, their compassion, their joie de vivre. The sheer scope of one man's vast visual history of the community—forty-four thousand negatives—astonishes even those who admire his work.<sup>2</sup> But much of Brammar's life was neither so memorable nor so successful.

The bushy-browed Brammar was a very private person despite his high visibility. Some claim, unkindly, that he had no choice; he usually reeked of the

acrid photo processing chemicals in which he worked.<sup>3</sup> Even most of his intimates did not know the basic details of his life. Francis was born on April 23, 1900, in Wadsworth, Nevada, to Archibald and Sydia Steele. His parents separated, however, and nine years later Sydia married Ritner G. Brammar, a traveling salesman. The family moved to Denver where Francis attended elementary school and South Denver High School. In 1916 the family moved to Cheyenne, Wyoming, where the boy's stepfather managed the Jewel Tea Company from his home.<sup>4</sup>

After graduation from Cheyenne High School in 1919, Bram apparently clerked in a local paint store where he earned enough to buy a camera, a 4x5 Graflex, and began taking pictures as a hobby.<sup>5</sup> That fall he enrolled at the University of Wyoming in Laramie, but the puckish prankster quit after one year.<sup>6</sup>

Brammar spent at least part of the next three years working for the Union Pacific Railroad, but in 1924 he went East to school, enrolling at the Chicago Branch of the New York Institute of Photography. He found his niche. So quickly did he learn what he had not already taught himself that the faculty asked him to join their staff. His responsibilities included teaching still and motion picture photography. In 1926, while covering a convention in the Windy City, he was offered a job with the famed Hearst-Pathe Company of Hollywood. Accepting the offer, Brammar packed

his bags and returned to Cheyenne to visit his family before moving to the movie mecca in California. Once back on the High Plains, however, his love of the great open spaces was revived. At the same time, a fateful turn in his parents' tortured relationship dramatically changed his life. His stepfather deserted his mother in July, 1928.<sup>7</sup>

Faced with supporting himself and his mother, Brammar struggled as a clerk until 1928, when he landed a proofreading job with the Tribune Publishing Company. About a year later he joined the *Wyoming Tribune* reportorial ranks and also married a gorgeous redhead named Dolores. Although nothing is known of her background or how they

1. Telephone interview: Red Kelso by Larry Brown, Cheyenne, Wyoming 15 January 1995.

2. "A Celebration of 50 Years of Cheyenne History through the photos of Francis Brammar," exhibit brochure (Cheyenne: Cheyenne Old West Museum in cooperation with the Wyoming State Museum and Cheyenne Newspapers, Inc., October, 1984).

3. Telephone interview: Red Kelso, Cheyenne, 5 December 1994; also, interview with Mark Junge, Cheyenne, 5 November 1994.

4. "Superintendent's Card," Laramie County School District No.1, Cheyenne, n.d.; also 1918 *Cheyenne City Directory* (Salt Lake City: R.L. Polk & Co., 1918), p.35; 1920 *Cheyenne City Directory*, (Salt Lake City: R.L. Polk & Co., 1920), p.38; "Action for Divorce," Sydia Brammar, Plaintiff v. Ritner G. Brammar, Defendant, Docket No. 17S-145, Laramie County First District Court, filed 28 August 1929, p.145.

5. Kirk Knox, "A Tribute Profile ... Brammar: A Man of Many Parts," *Wyoming (Cheyenne) State Tribune*, 11 June 1961, p.5; also Wanda Oldham, "Francis Brammar," *Capitol (Cheyenne) Times*, 1983, p.7.

6. Telephone interview: Rebeca Macon, Student Records, University of Wyoming, Laramie, 7 December 1994.

7. Knox, "Brammar: Man of Many Parts"; also "Action for Divorce"; also telephone interview: Margaret Laybourn, Cheyenne, 11 January 1995.

met, given Brammar's unabashed passion for posing beautiful women, she may have been one of his many cheese-cake models.<sup>8</sup>

His next job was with a local etching and engraving company which was taken over in 1932 by Tracy McCracken to support his fledgling *Wyoming Eagle* newspaper.<sup>9</sup> In return for his work Brammar received a small weekly stipend plus lab space and supplies.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the lack of information about Brammar's life during the next six or seven years, apparently it was relatively uneventful. Recollections from business associates such as Bernard Horton, however, provide insight into Brammar's character and work ethics. The *Wyoming Eagle* editor once recalled: "We never quite figured out Bram's working hours. Once when we asked him about them, he replied, 'I do not believe in working hours for newspapermen. I don't believe any newspaper man who is worth a damn should be confined by set working hours.'"<sup>11</sup>

Little is known of the personal life of the enigmatic Brammar during this period except that Dolores left him about 1941 because of his roving eye and suspected philandering. He apparently found solace, however, in his spartan apartment on Carey Avenue. It became the focal point in his own Walden Pond. Resembling a type of Henry David Thoreau—who actually was his philosophical mentor and muse—Brammar stoically witnessed the next twenty years of Cheyenne history through the viewfinder of his camera.<sup>12</sup>

By 1960 Brammar had become a devotee of the miniature camera and began shooting almost exclusively with a Leica. It seems clear to students of his work that he emulated pioneer photo-journalists Alfred Eisenstadt and Henri Cartier Bresson in honing his spot news skills. His friend and associate, Red Kelso, said Brammar was one of the first press photographers to switch to the 35mm format at a time "when even the slickers in the big cities were still using Speed Graflexes."<sup>13</sup> The small-format camera was not only more convenient, it increased the speed with which he worked. Dubbed "One-shot Bram," a



WYOMING STATE MUSEUM

Photographer Francis S. Brammar, who was called "the man without a hat" by humorist Will Rogers, earned that sobriquet for a reason. Brammar went rabbit hunting one day and shot a small rabbit. As it lay dying, the bunny's sad, brown eyes seemed to ask, "Why?" Weeping in remorse, Brammar left his hat at the scene and swore never to replace it or shoot a gun again.

nickname which seemed to give him satisfaction, he boasted of his penchant for snapping only one photograph: "I never had to take it but once." Although his technique was unorthodox, it did not detract from the quality of his work. He would set the camera for the estimated distance, hold it above his head and click the shutter ...once.<sup>14</sup> His methodology did not prevent positive recognition by his peers. In 1976 he was honored by the National Press Photographers Association with the "Bert Williams Award."<sup>15</sup>

Alone and aging, Bram slowly deteriorated until, in the summer of 1980, he was brought down by an infection that ravaged his frail frame. Police found him ill in the doorway of a local business and took him to DePaul Hospital. Less than two weeks later he was moved to his final home at the Cheyenne Health Care Center.<sup>16</sup>

More fortunate than many photographers, Brammar reaped public

praise for his professional work while he was alive, thanks to his friend and long-time Cheyenne resident, Margaret Laybourn. She rescued more than 44,000 film and glass plate negatives from the chaos of his photo lab and encouraged Brammar to donate the mass of materials to the Wyoming State Museum. Volunteers subsequently sorted and arranged his pictorial treasury of Cheyenne history into a permanent collection.<sup>17</sup>

Although age and health halted his favorite hobbies of fishing, hiking, bike riding, and boomerang throwing, Brammar continued to find joy in prose and poetry. Friends recall, for instance, his recitation of a passage from William Cullen Bryant's poem *Thanatopsis*: "...approach thy grave, like one who wraps the drapery of his couch about him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."<sup>18</sup>

Those sweet reveries came to Francis Brammar on Saturday, April 19, 1986, four days before his eighty-sixth birthday.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>8</sup> 1926 Cheyenne City Directory, 1926, p.34; also 1928 Cheyenne City Directory, 1928, p.41, 1929-30 Cheyenne City Directory, 1929, p.55; Knox, "Brammar: Man of Many Parts." Brammar, claims Knox, readily admitted that gorgeous gals were one of his favorite pictorial subjects.

<sup>9</sup> "A Celebration of 50 Years of Cheyenne History..."; also Rosie Harty, "For Fall Photo Exhibit Bram's Living History Preserved," *Cheyenne Eagle-Tribune*, SunDAY Magazine, Cheyenne, 31 July 1983.

<sup>10</sup> Telephone interview: Red Kelso.

<sup>11</sup> Bernard Horton, "Bram has 'Gone Fishing,'" *Sunday Eagle Tribune* 27 April 1986.

<sup>12</sup> 1933-34 Cheyenne City Directory (Salt Lake City, R L Polk & Co., 1933, p. 51).

<sup>13</sup> Knox, "A Tribute Profile..."; also telephone interview: Red Kelso, 5 December 1994.

<sup>14</sup> Telephone interview: Margaret Laybourn.

<sup>15</sup> Rosie Harty, "For Fall Photo Exhibit..."; also Wanda Oldham, "Francis Brammar" Betty Rath, "Photographer Francis Brammar." Only photographers who work for more than forty years at their craft are eligible for the Bert Williams Award.

<sup>16</sup> Telephone interviews: Red Kelso, also Sue Grigsby, Patient Records Department, DePaul Hospital, Cheyenne, 6 January 1995.

<sup>17</sup> Rosie Harty, "For Fall Photo Exhibit..."; also "50 Years of Cheyenne History..."; "Francis Brammar Will Be Honored Sept. 24," *Wyoming State Tribune*, 12 September 1985.

<sup>18</sup> Bernard Horton, "Bram has 'Gone Fishing'"

<sup>19</sup> "Graveside Rites Tuesday for Francis Brammar," *Wyoming State Tribune*, 21 April 1986.

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De L



## ♦In the Beginning♦

# Lusty Lady of Lusk

by Larry K. Brown

*The rich scent of fast food, plus the happy hum of the crowd with its confetti faces barking bids to the auctioneers, gave the sale a carnival air. But for the friends of Dell Burke, it was anything but festive. Rather, it was a sad, sordid little wake.*

*Most of those who shopped beneath the bright broad sky the warm two days of August, 1981 in Cusk once were so shy of Dell that they crossed the street to avoid her shadow. Now they sought her shade so that they could peek behind her red velvet drapes. The brass room keys, naughty-nighties and pastel silk hose were there. The Dell they had hoped to find, however, was dead. She had been gone, in fact, for nearly a year.<sup>1</sup>*

The petite, auburn-haired beauty entered life as Mary Ada Fisher on July 5, 1888, in Somerset, Ohio, about thirty miles southeast of Columbus.<sup>2</sup> The only daughter of John and Almeda (nee Cotterman) Fisher and the youngest of their four children, she was baptized by a pastor of the Somerset Lutheran Parish.<sup>3</sup>

In the winter of 1897 Mary's family learned that her uncle Charles, who had settled in Dakota Territory, had died in a blizzard. It was while her parents were settling his estate that they, too, became infected by the homesteading fever. The following spring John Fisher and his family boarded a westbound train—their household goods in one car and their livestock in another—and headed for Dakota. Stopping first on Tongue River at Cavalier, they lived briefly in one of the boxcars provided by the railroad to aid in their resettlement. Dell remembered

1. Ron Franscell, "Last Bawdy House Trinkets Gone, But Memories Linger," Casper Star-Tribune, Casper, Wyoming, 17 August 1981, pp. A1, A12. An estimated 3,000 antique dealers and curiosity seekers from as far as Florida, New York and California attended the sale which lasted more than seventeen hours during August 14-15.

2. Letter, Loraine A. Fisher, Harrison, Michigan, to Larry K. Brown, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 29 December 1993.

3. Letter, Pastor O.E. Doesken, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Somerset, Ohio, to the Fisher family, 14 February 1942. According to Pastor Doesken, the minister who baptized Mary was Rev. L.H. Burry. Mary's brothers were Burl, Charles and Herbert.

*Opposite: Demure, refined and elegant Mary Ada Fisher, whose family believed she was widowed and had used her inheritance to buy and manage "a hotel out west." Indeed, she might have been that gentle woman had she not stumbled on the way and become "Dell Burke," the lusty lady of Cusk. (ca. 1915). Unless otherwise noted, all photos are from the Loraine A. Fisher Collection, Harrison, Michigan.*

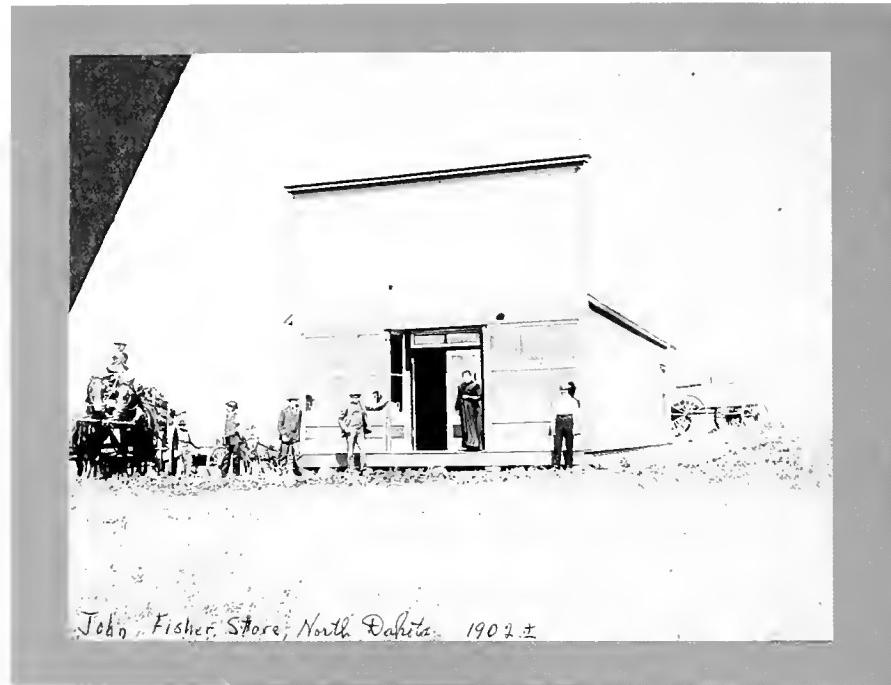
B u R k e

with pride that her mother kept that home-on-wheels as "neat as a pin."<sup>7</sup>

The family subsequently went west, arriving at Rolla on April 7, 1898. There were no accommodations at the hotels so Rolette County officials boarded them and other passengers in the local courthouse. Stoves were installed for cooking and to ward off the spring chill. Several days later the Fishers moved on to Wolf Creek, a small township in Dakota Territory roughly 23 miles south of the Manitoba, Canadian border. There John bought 160 acres for himself plus an additional 160 acres in his wife's name. The cost? A grand total of \$51.20 or sixteen cents an acre. Money for the transaction was loaned to John, who had little collateral, by a trusting man in the area. Having been a merchant in Ohio, Mary's dad built the Fisher Store and Post Office later that year at what would be known during the brief time it existed as Fisher, North Dakota.

Mary, the apple of her daddy's eye, was sent at about age thirteen to St. Bernard's Academy. At that Catholic school in Grand Forks, North Dakota she received an elementary education from Mother Superior Stanislaus Rafter and her Ursuline nuns.<sup>8</sup> The opportunity to leave home and stretch her wings must have seemed exciting at first to Mary as she and her girlfriends spent much of their free time standing on the convent fence calling to boys at the nearby college. But with the passage of puberty Marie, as she preferred to be called, apparently found the strict religious environment too confining and welcomed the chance to rejoin her family.<sup>9</sup>

The Fishers in the meantime had sold their property to the what was known as the Soo (Minneapolis, St. Paul and Sault Ste. Marie) Railway about 1905. After a brief visit back East to see their relatives they returned to North Dakota, this time to Bottineau County. They settled in Omemee about twenty miles west of their previous home in Fisher.<sup>10</sup> Seventeen year-old Marie took a job filling out weigh bills and handling other paperwork at the local depot, and there she met Stephen J. Law who was seven years her senior. The Canadian railroad freight con-



*After moving into an area near Wolf Creek, Dakota Territory in April, 1898, John Fisher built a combination store/post office. During the brief time it existed the small compound was known as Fisher, North Dakota. (ca. 1902)*

ductor and his young love, who stretched the truth and swore she was a legal eighteen years old, were wed November 12, 1905, in Grafton, North Dakota.<sup>9</sup> Moving into her new home in that small town, she met the sister with whom her husband had long shared the house. But she was soon overwhelmed by her husband's strong-willed sibling. Fed up with her jealous spouse's boasts that "Canadians are better than Americans," Marie left the following year to seek a life on her own.<sup>10</sup>

### ◆ Marie Turns ◆ Professional

Traveling northwest to Calgary, Alberta Marie went to work at the famed resort hotel at Banff. There she endeared herself to the local police chief and his son who protected her from Stephen's pursuit. She claimed, however, that it was easier to rid herself of her husband than it was to deflect the amorous advances of the officer's son. With a limited income and faced with a relationship as untenable as the one she left in North Dakota, Marie made a decision that would lead her into the demimonde.<sup>11</sup>

Although it is not clear why Marie

chose the course she did, probably she needed money. She also was attractive and found men unusually vulnerable to her dark charms. Taking a wider perspective, one may understand how the environment

4. Loraine Fisher letter, 1993. The uncle was a brother of her mother, Almeda. See also Douglas A. Wick, *North Dakota Place Names*, (Bismarck, North Dakota: Hede Markan Collectibles, 1988), p.65. Fisher was situated in the northwest quarter of Section 26, Township 160N, Range 72W in Rollette County.

5. Wick, *North Dakota Place Names*, 1988.

6. Memoirs (tape recording) of Bruce Bergstrom, Greybull, Wyoming, n.d.; also, Fr. William Sherman, *Scattered Steeples*, (Fargo, North Dakota: BL&L Publishing Co., 1988), pp.51-59.

7. Sherman, "Scattered Steeples...", 1988.

8. Loraine Fisher letter with transcript of *Lutheran Herald*, believed to have been printed in Omemee, North Dakota, n.d.; also Wick, *North Dakota Place Names*, p.145. Although Omemee no longer exists, the original townsite was in Section 4, Township 160N, Range 75W. The Fishers eventually moved to nearby Rollette, where they owned and managed the Imperial Hotel. They died in Rollette and are buried there in the cemetery.

9. State of North Dakota, County Court, Walsh County, Grafton, North Dakota, *Application for a Marriage License*, 11 November 1905; *Marriage License*, 11 November 1905; and *Certificate of Marriage*, 12 November 1905. Marie and Stephen were married by Presbyterian minister C.D. McDonald in the presence of J.C. McDonald and H. McLean. Coincidentally, her brother Charles also was married on November 12, 1905 in Omemee.

10. Telephone interview, James Fagan, Casper, Wyoming by Larry K. Brown, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 14 January 1994.

11. Memoirs of Bruce Bergstrom, n.d. Since she was the wife of a railroad employee, Mary undoubtedly had a rail pass and probably made the trip via train.

of early twentieth-century society contributed to her fall from grace. An ambitious woman of that time, regardless of her station, had few options for personal or professional self-expression and independence. If a woman was affluent she could bask in the accomplishments of her husband or son. A lucky few gained celebrity as hostesses, sponsors of artists and musicians, or promoters of charitable causes. But for a single female, especially one still in her teens without independent means of support, survival was a challenge. Her options were few unless she was skilled, for instance, in sewing or the crafts. With special training she could aspire to teach or nurse. Lacking those choices she might be faced with such extreme options as entering either a religious order or the "world's oldest profession": prostitution. Marie chose the latter. It required little or no investment. A low-watt lamp and wrought-iron bed could be transformed almost magically with a look and a smile into cold, hard cash. Being a quick study in her trade, Marie assumed the first of many stage names and followed the call of the wild to Alaska.<sup>12</sup>

## ❖ On to Alaska ❖

Her decision to leave the States and move to the far north was made at a propitious time. The seeds of mid-nineteenth century English socialism which were brought across the Atlantic during the last quarter of the century took root in the urban unrest of America's northeastern seaboard cities. The proponents of the Progressive Movement, as historians call the wave of reform, were determined to introduce a system of community guilds and settlements that they hoped would correct the class distinctions and social ills they believed had been brought about by urbanism and industrialization. Toward that end, they organized such programs as the National Child Labor Committee, the National Women's Trade Union League, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Playground Association, the National Conference on City Planning and the National Conference on Charities and Corrections. They lobbied for a federal investigation of women and children in the industrial workforce. Their ideas and

initiatives were so forceful that from their numbers and influence the Progressive Party was born.<sup>13</sup>

The Progressives believed that they could achieve their broad objectives by stamping out such vices as gambling, alcohol abuse and prostitution that exacerbated other, larger problems. They believed that this could be done, in part, by making social centers out of schools, parks and libraries so that they, in turn, could supplant saloons and brothels. Thus, what Victorians had discreetly regarded as the necessary evils of human nature, turn-of-the-century Americans came to view as social evils, moral problems and national menaces. They also believed that a strong connection existed between low wages and lax moral conditions among young women. Public anxiety over promiscuity and other unacceptable behavior peaked during the years 1911-1916 as prostitution was linked to every imaginable form of individual and public corruption. Progressives were convinced that prostitution was closely related to the saloon and the dance hall, and began a campaigning to preserve and improve human resources and prevent the exploitation of women and children by establishing adequate play spaces and social centers, and by crusading for prohibition. Under those circumstances America was no place for Dell or her ilk. Alaska, however, was another story.

It was in Juneau, a hub of traffic moving to or from the rich gold fields, that Marie learned a lesson in life that served her well: nature hates a vacuum. No void of women was ever more nearly complete than Alaska where, in the early 1900s, there was but one woman for every one hundred men.<sup>14</sup> Given her unhappy marital experience, Marie must have felt extraordinarily special in a land where...

*A white woman is treated everywhere on the Pacific slope, not as man's equal and companion, but as a strange and costly creature, which by virtue of its rarity is freed from the restraints and penalties of ordinary law.<sup>15</sup>*

12. Charles Hillinger, "'A Sporting House' Madam for 54 Years," *Los Angeles Times*, 26 March 1973, pp.3,30; also Red Fenwick, "Buyers to Blitz Bordello Booty," *The Denver Post*, 2 August 1981, p.4.

13. Allen F. Davis, *Spearhead for Reform* (New York:Oxford University Press, 1967), pp.3-8.



Braddock's New Picture Gallery.  
S. Euclid St., Somerset, O.

*Six year-old Mary Ada Fisher poses precociously at her father John's knee. This family portrait with her mother Almeda and brothers (from left) Herbert, Charles and Burl was taken in a Somerset, Ohio studio. (ca. 1894)*



*Marie and Canadian railroad freight conductor Stephen C. Law were married on November 12, 1905 in Grafton, North Dakota. The seventeen year-old bride stretched the truth about her age when she swore she was eighteen, the legal age to wed. (ca. 1905)*



*In one of the few reunions with her family after she entered professional life, Dell (upper right) shares this happy time with her brothers Burl (left) and Charles. Her sister-in-law Nora (center) moved to Custer in 1931 where she worked for Dell after her husband Charles disappeared mysteriously on a business trip. (ca. 1929)*

She remembered well that Saturday nights were especially grand as the governor and members of the Alaska Legislature visited the establishment where she worked to drink and socialize. Some were even known to engage in more than verbal intercourse.<sup>16</sup>

So it was in that far away land of the midnight sun that Marie struck pay dirt big time. Success was swift and within one year she made \$10,000.<sup>17</sup> An aggressive, unwanted suitor even gave her a gold and diamond ring. But in a fit of petulance, Marie declared her independence by throwing his gift into the icy Yukon River.<sup>18</sup>

### *Return to the States*

Soon thereafter, as the boom went bust and the hostile cold took its toll, Marie and a girlfriend moved south in 1914 to Seattle, Washington.<sup>19</sup> It was not long, however, before puritanical pressure exerted by proponents of the Progressive movement, as well as the girls' own quest for the best, drove them toward Portland, Oregon. Following a brief stay they continued to Butte, Montana, where they learned of America's entry into World War I. While Marie was in Butte she claimed that she was nearly kidnapped by a wealthy stockgrower from Dixon, North Dakota, who had taken a shine to her. Apparently, without telling Marie he paid her madam a handsome price to take the young prostitute away to his ranch. She

probably believed, when he took her from the house where she worked, that they were simply going out on a date. Instead, he led to her to the train depot where the deal he made was explained. Marie, however, refused to go. When he tried to pull her aboard the train, she became so upset that she broke from his grasp and ran to nearby police for protection.<sup>20</sup>

Learning of the famed Salt Creek Field boom, Marie and her girlfriend followed the trail of oil and money in late 1917 or early 1918 to Casper, Wyoming. They were able to set up shop in time to celebrate the World War I armistice in the notorious vice-ridden Sandbar district.<sup>21</sup> When they first arrived at that new addition to the east edge of the city, its wild and wooly lifestyle must have rivaled that of heyday Alaska. But the Progressive wave of moral reform that was sweeping America finally reached Wyoming in the form of prohibition. In 1918 Wyoming adopted the Eighteenth Amendment by a vote of more than three to one. The state became bone dry after July 1, 1919.<sup>22</sup> Regardless of whether or not they felt encouraged or threatened by that impending statewide legislation, Casper city fathers met in closed session in February, 1919, and declared that the Sandbar

*...is and has been for some time a rendezvous for all manner of crooks and criminals, a breeding ground for vice of every character, where state statutes are violated with impunity, intoxicating liquors being sold without license in illegal resorts, practically every form of vice flourishing without restraint.<sup>23</sup>*

Lusk Wyo  
June - 9 - 30

Dear Cousin Homer:  
I surely enjoyed your interesting letter it rather took me back to my childhood days again.

14. Cy Martin, *Whiskey and Wild Women* (New York: Hart Publishing Company, 1974), pp.246-249.

15. Earl F. Nation, M.D., "Fallen Angels of the Far West," *The Branding Iron* (Westerners, Los Angeles Corral), 143 (June, 1981): p.3.

16. Telephone interview, Bob Darrow, Denver, Colorado, by Larry K. Brown, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 19 January 1994.

17. Charles Hillinger, "Everybody Likes Dell—but Most Avoid Her," *The Los Angeles Times*, 26 March 1973, pp.3,20.

18. Letter, Bruce Bergstrom, Greybull, Wyoming to Larry K. Brown, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 16 January 1994.

19. Hillinger, "Everybody Likes Dell...."

20. *Memoirs of Bruce Bergstrom*, n.d.; also Robert Darrow interview, 1994. Marie described the travels she made following her stay in Alaska. Interviewees confirmed she visited France and Hawaii as well as Hong Kong, Japan, Shanghai and Singapore. In Paris she encountered fascinating military officers and their wives who shared her hotel. Dell also told several different individuals she had married a wealthy Malta, Montana, rancher but his family never accepted her so she moved on. A search of available records has not confirmed her claim.



MARK JONES

Dating from the Lance Creek Oil Field boom days, the infamous Yellow Hotel at 219 Griffith Boulevard in Custer catered to politicians, cattle barons, national guardsmen and oil patch workers. Since Dell's death in November 1980, the once brightly-colored building has been abandoned and nearly forgotten. 1984.

The next month the city council declared a war on vice by passing an ordinance making it illegal for a prostitute to be on the streets, in doorways or windows or anywhere else subject to public view between the hours of 7:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. By the end of March, 224 arrests had been made as a result of the new law, the greatest number of apprehensions for any single month in Casper's history.<sup>21</sup> Spurred that summer by the local mavens of morality, the council determined that nine Sandbar resorts selling liquor without a license should be shut down. In the first bootlegging raid made

in Natrona County, police found stills from which they confiscated thousands of gallons of wine, beer and whiskey.

### Lance Creek Boom Draws Dell to Custer

Although Wyoming's weather was warmer than the bitter clime of the Far North, Marie was feeling too much heat and knew from experience she must pack and leave again. So it was east to Lusk, Wyoming where a populace of 10,000 was bobbing on the crest of the Lance Creek oil wave. Arriving in early 1919 at the age of thirty with her health and good looks, she found herself in the midst of more men than she could easily count. "Lusk is what Casper was!" she may have thought. In fact, with a hearty laugh she told a reporter in later years: "I thought the name of the place

was 'Lust.' That's one of the reasons I came."<sup>25</sup> Sporting her latest alias, "Dell Burke," she and her girlfriend set up a tent where they served their customers.<sup>26</sup> It was not long, however, before Dell rented a house from Lusk Mayor J.E. Mayes where, as madam, she and her soiled doves went to work that same afternoon.<sup>27</sup> Approximately a year later on January 5, 1920 Dell and Bessie Housley bought a stucco, two-story structure at 219 West First St.<sup>28</sup>

Dell showed her flair for marketing by introducing her new girls to the com-

21. *Memoirs of Bruce Bergstrom*, n.d.

22. T.A. Larson, *History of Wyoming* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), p.409.

23. Walter Jones, *The Sandbar*, (Casper, Wyoming: Baso Inc., 1981), pp.24-25.

24. Jones, *The Sandbar*, pp.77-78. It was City Ordinance #77A. According to Jones, prostitution was the Sandbar's greatest attraction.

25. Hillinger, "Everybody Likes Dell...."

26. Sue F. Ellis, "Dell Burke's Yellow Hotel," unpublished manuscript, Stagecoach Museum, Lusk, Wyoming, 5 January 1989, p.2.

27. Telephone interview, James Griffith, Peoria, Arizona, by Larry K. Brown, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 8 December 1993.

28. Telephone interview, former sheriff Harold E. Rogers, Lusk, Wyoming by Larry K. Brown, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 30 December 1993.

munity by having them stroll down the street, her beloved Pekingese in their arms. Dell was a "real good-hearted old girl," one Lusk man was fond of saying. "The girls weren't too shiny when she got hold of them. She cleaned them up and dressed them," he said, "and made them look like real-good looking ladies."<sup>29</sup> Their accommodations included ten bedrooms on the top floor of the freshly painted, yellow bagnio. It was from its paint that the building derived the "Yellow Hotel" nickname. According to a patron it was a rather long building divided by a hall through the center with rooms on both sides. Dell's modest apartment, consisted of parlor, living room, bath and bedroom, which were joined like the cars of a train along the ground floor on the east side of the building. Because of the hotel's location southwest from the depot that was across the tracks and street, the locals indicate, sometimes little old ladies would come to town for a convention, see the sign and knock on the front door for a room. Dell, always polite, simply told them there were no vacancies and sent them on down the street. Kids enroute to the local swimming hole found the hotel along their path. One oldtimer recalled, "When I was a kid...it was just an automatic detour to see what was going on at Dell's. It was fascinating because it was a no-no. Dell would see us and say, 'You boys ought not be here!' and she'd chase us off."<sup>30</sup>

Despite passage of the Volstead Act in October, 1919, and the subsequent

pressure of Prohibition, liquor continued to be as indispensable in the foreplay of the brothel business as cigarettes and sleep are to some following sex. "When this place was booming," Dell said, "money was plentiful, so were women, booze and gambling."<sup>31</sup> To insure an ample supply of containers for her moonshine, Dell hired boys to scavenge the area around local halls such as the "Merry Whirl" following Saturday night dances. She paid five cents for each empty, half-pint liquor bottle. Unfortunately, one youngster took advantage of what he knew about her business to sneak some hooch from her stash. When she discovered the theft she called the suspect at school and asked him to stop by her hotel after class. When he arrived Dell served the unsuspecting lad a soft drink before spending the next half hour praising his potential and telling him how much she admired his parents. As he started to leave she called him back and said, "never steal from your friends." Nothing more was said, but for the young man the lesson was never forgotten.<sup>32</sup>

29. "Dell Burke Estate Auction is Featured in 'Stars and Stripes,'" *Lusk Herald*, 3 September 1981, p.8.

30. Mark Bagne, "Red Light Days are Recalled at Auction," *Wyoming Tribune-Eagle*, 16 August 1981, p.1

31. Hillinger, "Everybody Likes Dell...."

32. Telephone interview, anonymous interviewee by Larry K. Brown, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 14 January 1994.

33. John Kobler, *Ardent Spirits: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition*, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1973), p.283.

34. John Kobler, *Ardent Spirits: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition*, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1973), p.283.

## The Power of Prohibition

While Dell understood the golden rule, she failed to heed laws regarding illegal possession and sale of alcoholic beverages. She paid dearly when she failed to heed the following warning by John F. Kramer, the nation's first Prohibition Commissioner:

*This law will be obeyed in cities, large and small, and in villages, and where it is not obeyed it will be enforced. We shall see to it that it (liquor) is not manufactured, nor sold, nor given away, nor hauled in anything over the surface of the earth or under the earth or in the air.<sup>33</sup>*

In support of such political posturing, one ardent Prohibition advocate added, "The putting of the fear of God in the minds of those who fear neither God nor man is the chief function of good government."<sup>34</sup> It was in this "Roaring Twenties" environment that federal prohibition agents arrested approximately 577,000 suspects. It was a problem, too, for Lusk and Dell Burke. Her stubbornness was tested by loyal, patriotic Wyoming officials, who, like their federal counterparts, were determined to punish those whom they perceived had flagrantly violated federal liquor laws. From August, 1928 to March, 1929, Dell and her establishment were busted with regularity. Charges ran the gamut from illegal possession and sale of whiskey to allegations of lewdness, prostitution and gambling,



I have no children  
you know I have been  
a widow for twelve years.

but the lawmen clearly were targeting alcohol-related crimes. She paid fines ranging from \$25 to \$300 per offense.<sup>35</sup>

## The Light & Power Loan

Determined to survive in the face of what she must have believed was harassment, Dell concocted a scheme, possibly with the help of her lawyer, that would offer relief. She learned that the Lusk Light and Power Department was confronted in 1929 with the necessity to replace equipment. A 200-kilowatt engine and generator had to be installed immediately to supply the inhabitants of the town with light and water. As the leaders of Lusk were struggling to finance the replacement of \$22,300 worth of vital equipment, Dell apparently came to the rescue with a personal loan to be repaid at six per cent interest.<sup>36</sup> Although Dell's name does not appear in public records, more than one source confirmed

that she "bailed us out when we were about to go under."<sup>37</sup>

Mayor T.A. Godfrey and his city council members were grateful, too. But that did not prevent authorities beyond their influence and jurisdiction from enforcing Wyoming law. On March 11, 1930

35. Niobrara County District Criminal Case File #5-112, 6 December 1929 with *Precipe for Summons and Injunction*, undated; Niobrara County District Criminal Case File #C-119, 8 January 1924, "Possession"; #C-102 & #C-1232 "Possession" 23 July 1929; *Lusk Justice of Peace Combined Civil and Criminal Docket*, Vol.I, Niobrara County Courthouse, December 1919-1925, p.456; Vol. II, 1926-1932, p.85. According to the Precipe, since November 25, 1923, Dell had "given away and sold and delivered intoxicating liquors in and about the premises including moonshine whiskey" on at least twelve occasions from August, 1928, through mid-February, 1929.

36. *Council Proceedings*, City of Lusk, Wyoming, Vol. 3, June 14, 1929, pp.100-101,104,148. The city gained \$8,700 from the sale of surplus equipment, and preserved that amount for the purpose of equipment replacement, so Dell's loan may have been as much as \$14,600. Records indicate that a total of 48 payments of \$280.00 each and totaling \$22,140 were made to the Lusk State Bank in order to pay off the note.

37. Hillinger, "Everybody Likes Dell...."



Following her success as a prostitute during gold rush days in the Yukon, Dell worked in a series of brothels in Washington, Oregon and Montana before settling in Wyoming in 1917. (ca. 1918)

Below left: Dell's Yellow Hotel is the second structure from the far left in the complex of buildings near Chicago and North Western (Burlington Northern) rails that extend east towards Nebraska. (ca. 1908)





DON CHRISTENSEN, SCOTTSDALE, NEBRASKA

*Above: Dell and her faithful Pekingese companion "Chi Chi" share the running board of this vintage sedan. Girls hired by Dell to work in her Yellow Hotel introduced themselves to the community by walking the street with Dell's pet in their arms. (ca. 1935)*

*Left: Stylish in her short-sleeved dress and ermine muff and collar. Dell loved to pose in her finery. (ca. 1940)*



Judge C.O. Brown of the Sixth Judicial District Court authorized an injunction that closed the Yellow Hotel to all but private dwelling purposes until the end of that year.<sup>38</sup> Chastised, Dell decided to mend her ways and play the game. But with new rules. Although she left no paper trail, it is popularly accepted that Dell lost no time in reminding city fathers that she held their loan and that if they did not want her to "shut off their water" –literally as well as figuratively since electricity powered the pump that supplied the town's water– they would be wise to allow her

to reopen the Yellow Hotel without interference when the injunction ended December 31.<sup>39</sup>

Although she encountered no more official interference with her business, those who saw Dell's little black books detailing three generations of clients claimed that the Depression hurt her as much as anyone. "In 1933, there was a day when she only took in \$4 and the next day she only took in \$3. But she always got cash -no checks," said Helen E. Brummell, a Torrington resident who later helped prepare Dell's estate for

sale.<sup>40</sup> Even the end of Prohibition that year did not immediately end the trying times for Dell or other people of Wyoming because at first only 3.2 per cent beer was available. It was not until April, 1935 that Wyoming officials finally passed legislation that legalized stronger alcoholic drinks.<sup>41</sup> Dell's success and ability to operate with relative impunity were not hurt by the fact that she knew many prominent people in Wyoming, including politicians, public officials and businessmen. With a bit of an edge to her voice Dell said, "Oh, have I known people—have I known hypocrites." One civic leader confided that she had the town in the palm of her hand for years. "Maybe it's because I know too much for everybody's good," Lusk's madam once said. "There are ten churches in town. But not a minister or a priest has ever preached against me so far as I know. And I've known them all on a first name basis." Obviously, Dell felt comfortable with the community's live and let live attitude.<sup>42</sup>

38. Niobrara County Criminal Case File #5-112. Dell took advantage of the forced respite to visit her sister-in-law and other relatives in Michigan, the only time she returned to her birthplace.

39. Harold E. Rogers interview, 1993. Dell apparently made her point because, as Rogers explains, during the eleven years (1967-1978) that he was sheriff in the community he and his men responded to only one disturbance at the Yellow Hotel. It involved a U.S. Army National Guard soldier who was drunk and disorderly.

40. Telephone interview, Helen E. Brummell, Torrington, Wyoming, by Larry K. Brown, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 26 January 1994. Mrs. Brummell described the "small, diary-type books, the kind you might get in a dimestore" as one that contained only dates, amounts received and the girls' names. No clients were identified.

41. T.A. Larson, *History of Wyoming*, p.443.

42. Telephone interview, Charles Hillinger, Rancho Palos Verdes, California by Larry K. Brown, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 13 December 1993. Although she did not mention customers by name, Dell made it clear that she felt nothing but contempt for the hypocrites who were serviced by her girls. *Memoirs of Bruce Bergstrom*, n.d.

43. Telephone interview, William H. Smith, Cheyenne, Wyoming, by Larry K. Brown, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 24 January 1994. Smith and Archie Lauer, who were responsible for collecting funds for billboards publicizing Lusk, solicited business people in the community including Dell. Smith said Dell would do anything to promote Lusk and paid for several signs and their upkeep. Although the signs were not intended to promote any particular enterprise, the sponsor's name was included as a courtesy.

44. Ron Franscell, "Last Bawdy House Trinkets Gone...", 1981.

45. Telephone interview, anonymous interviewee by Larry K. Brown, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 1 March 1994; also, Sue F. Ellis, "Dell Burke's Yellow Hotel," 1989. A local anecdote details how a father and son unexpectedly met in the hotel's narrow stairway. No words were exchanged then or later about the chance meeting.

## The Clover Years

As word of Dell's bordello spread, thanks in part to billboards posted on roads leading to Lusk, the rooms in which she kept her stable of eight women became filled with "Johns."<sup>43</sup> They came from all points of the compass for flings on the well-worn mattresses of her wrought iron beds. In the early years the girls did business with oil-patch workers or well-heeled speculators for as little as \$2.00 for a session lasting from twenty minutes to an hour, depending upon what Dell decided, of course.<sup>44</sup> The madam always answered the front door herself. Drunk and disorderly clients were rejected. To avoid attention men usually entered the back door before walking down the hall midway to the largest room in the house. There they picked a partner before heading upstairs to the rooms. Their progress was monitored with a unique mechanical system that identified the clients' rooms. She used an electric timer with bells that signalled when it was time for a customer to leave.<sup>45</sup>

T transient railroaders, hunters and servicemen also visited the hotel where they danced with the girls and munched what Dell called the best steaks in Wyoming. "I had an orchestra in my place for years," she claimed. "Had a Chinese cook, who served the best meals in the country."<sup>46</sup> As her clientele's greenbacks circulated in the local economy they sometimes had a most peculiar effect. A former local bank employee recollected:

*You know most money is dirty. But Dell and her girls always wore perfume and the money they brought into the bank always made the place smell wonderful. The smell would last until the money had been withdrawn. It was always a rush in the morning to open up the vault and get the first whiff of perfume.<sup>47</sup>*

## Rules by which to Live and Lust

Despite her success, Dell was not known to have breached her self-imposed bounds of propriety and was as tough on employees as she was on herself. In response to a local curfew she shut down her business promptly at midnight Monday through Saturday. Out of respect for churchgoers she also kept the hotel closed each Sunday. "That's so none of the boys come here instead of going to church," Dell once said. "I certainly wouldn't want any of my girls competing."<sup>48</sup> She also did not want them infected by venereal disease nor did she want the girls to harm their customers. As a precaution Dell hired local physicians such as Dr. Walter E. Reckling to inspect and treat the girls on a regular

basis. The long-time Lusk physician later credited Dell's operation in limiting sex-related abuse and crimes that might have otherwise affected "respectable" ladies and their daughters. The mother of Lusk resident Ed Ryder said she agreed. She supported Dell because, according to Ryder's son, the men "knew where they could go, and the women and young girls were safe to walk the streets."<sup>49</sup>

48. "Wyoming Town Finds Bonanza in Bordello," New York Times, 16 August 1981, p.28.

49. Telephone interview, Thelma Jean Bales, Laramie, Wyoming by Larry K. Brown, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 12 January 1994; also Bagne, "Red Light Days are Recalled...", 1981, p.1.

Where there are fish  
Yes I like to fish

*This unique mechanical device of timers and arrows, once located on the wall at the foot of the stairs in the Yellow Hotel, identified rooms in which Dell's clients were visiting her girls. A bell signalled when it was time for each customer to leave. The knob at the base of the timer was pulled to reset the clock.*

1994



MARK JUNGE

46. Charles Hillinger, "Everybody Likes Dell...", 1973.

47. Telephone interview, Mildred Ladwig, Lance Creek, Wyoming, by Larry K. Brown, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 25 January 1994.



*Dell loved to travel and made treks to many parts of the world. Here she enjoys Acapulco, Mexico. nd.*

Dell was as strict as she was caring in managing her workers. If one of the girls visited a bar in town and became intoxicated and obnoxious, the next day she was no longer employed at the Yellow Hotel.<sup>50</sup> Dell regularly visited the XL Cafe for afternoon coffee and took her well-groomed girls there for an occasional meal and an informal lesson in table manners. Her protegees always followed the boss's example by never speaking to anyone away from work unless spoken to first. "They all know me," Dell once said with a touch of sadness in her voice, "but all they do is nod and smile."<sup>51</sup> Another inviolate rule was that one never divulged the identity of a customer. Nevertheless, Dell confided that one of her

best patrons was an eighty-year-old man from out of town.<sup>52</sup>

Although Dell kept a tight rein on her girls she took them on trips to her 415-acre ranch about three miles east of Lusk. There they lounged on the flagstone patio in the shade of birch and pine trees.<sup>53</sup> As the sun set they ate steaks that Dell grilled on the barbecue in her large backyard. Memories of similar kindnesses are recalled in letters found in her home following her death. "Apparently she was always giving them money, helping them when they were sick and urging them on to a better life," explained Helen Brummell. "I also found boxes of toys that she had kept for her girls' kids," she added.<sup>54</sup>

## *The Dell Few Knew*

An air of care and concern veiled the almost painfully private and guarded woman whom few ever really knew well. Those who made the effort to know Dell, however, were rewarded. Struck by her beauty and sense of style, one columnist wrote: "Her hair was done up...not fanciful but well, and her face was unwrinkled. She dressed stylishly, but not gaudy. She wore no jewelry." Others remember her as being about 5'3" tall and small-boned, but stocky with a lovely, round face.<sup>55</sup> According to her hairdresser, Dell tried to arrive for hair-care appointments either before or after the main part of the business day. Following each visit to the beauty parlor she took pains to inquire if any of the other customers had been offended by her presence.<sup>56</sup> Although she was always subtly coiffured and modestly clad, Dell especially loved nice clothes, furs and jewelry. Her closets attested to that fact.<sup>57</sup> In the mid-1970s a west coast writer who interviewed Dell found her paradoxically prudish in some ways. "Everything is sex now," she muttered with disgust. "You see much more on TV and in the movies than you see in my place. I don't care for it that way. Sex

50. Sue F. Ellis, "Dell Burke's Yellow Hotel," 1989

51. *ibid.*

52. Ron Franscell, "Last Bawdy House Trinkets Gone..." 1981.

53. *Memoirs of Bruce Bergstrom*; also Franscell, "Last Bawdy House Trinkets Gone.... According to an advertising flyer, Dell's ranch properties were in "Township 32N, Range 63W of the 6th P.M., Sec.16, E-1/2, S-1/2, SW-1/4 containing 400 acres more or less. Sec. 9: part of Sec. 9" According to Niobrara County Assessor records (Book 108, p.139), Dell bought 18.5 acres, which included the ranch and outbuildings, in Section 9 from Florence Brown on October 20, 1945. It was not until December 29, 1950, that she added 480 acres to her holdings by purchasing a portion of Section 16 from the State of Wyoming. Sections 16 and 36 of every township are normally owned by the State of Wyoming. These "school" sections were reserved for educational purposes.

54. Helen E. Brummell interview, 1994.

55. Charles Hillinger, "Everybody Likes Dell...", 1973.

56. Telephone interview, Mary Engebretsen, Lusk, Wyoming by Larry K. Brown, Cheyenne, Wyoming 30 December 1993. Prior to her first appointment Dell was so anxious to avoid damage to Engebretsen's business and reputation that she offered to enter the shop through the back door. It was a precaution never required by the beautician.

57. Following Dell's death these items as well as expensively fashioned dresses and hats with designer labels, plus 100 pairs of size 6AA shoes, lined her closet. One old cowboy described it this way: "If I know Dell, there ain't no poor stuff in that pile. She didn't put up with no poor stuff." Ron Franscell, "Last Bawdy House Trinkets Gone...", 1981.

should be a private matter, not a public affair. Something behind closed doors, not in the open," she sniffed.<sup>58</sup>

**I**t was a sense of responsibility and her management style that perhaps set Dell apart from the peers in her profession. She was committed to the ethic that you should share some of what you earn with those who were the source of your gain. Frugal to the point of saving old newspapers, shopping bags and assorted clutter, she nevertheless gave money anonymously and generously to poor families, churches and nearly every civic project.<sup>59</sup> Dell took under her wing two young men who eventually earned Ph.D.s at Stanford and U.C.L.A. Each Christmas they sent her cards and thanked her for funding their educations. There may have been others like them.<sup>60</sup> On New Year's Eve, without fanfare, she arranged for a corsage to be given to each woman who visited local bars.<sup>61</sup> She even helped pay for a stone memorial dedicated to another Niobrara County madam, Mother Featherlegs.<sup>62</sup> On at least one occasion Dell let compassion slip beyond mere charitable concern when Bronson "Jerry" Dull, a local oilfield worker, lost his right leg in an accident while off-loading a truck in 1930. Down on his luck, Jerry got help from Dell, who helped set

him up as partner of the Oasis Bar and Club billiards hall on the main floor of Lusk's Ranger Hotel. They remained companions and, according to Dell, had planned to wed but Dull died of a heart attack on June 4, 1955, shortly before the ceremony.<sup>63</sup>

Thanks to her business acumen and the popularity of her Yellow Hotel, Dell continued to prosper while many of those around her succumbed financially to the stock market crash of 1929, the subsequent ravages of the Great Depression and the lean years of World War II. "Mrs. Burke," as she increasingly was called, became a member in absentia of the Lusk Chamber of Commerce and the Wyoming Farm Bureau. She also joined the local

## In the Wake of World War II

As the banner days of the oil boom waned in the late 1940s, then faded, Lusk's population slipped to fewer than 1,600. The dwindling economy and the lack of free-spending men had a decidedly adverse affect on Dell's business. The jazz band was replaced by a jukebox. Gourmet meals were replaced with snacks. Her bevy of beauties dwindled by the late 1970s to one or two who, like circuit riders, came to service the occasional paying customer during hunting season and annual national guard encampments.<sup>64</sup> The mahogany-paneled

main room of the Yellow Hotel, its walls lined with reproductions of paintings by Charles Russell and other western artists, by that time was usually without customers.<sup>65</sup>

However, having comfortably feathered her nest by investing smartly in real estate, oil and blue chip stocks Dell seemed to enjoy her leisure. And she earned it, having managed one of the most celebrated brothels in the state for nearly sixty years. She spent more and more of her time traveling or entertaining friends or an occasional relative at her ranch.<sup>66</sup> In retrospect it seems that she had finally found a home to



*As a tribute to "Mother Featherlegs"  
Shephard, an early Niobrara County madam.  
Dell helped pay for her native stone  
memorial. It was dedicated May 16, 1965  
southwest of Lusk along the old Cheyenne  
Black Hills stage road. 1965*

58. Charles Hillinger, "Everybody Likes Dell...", 1973.

59. Ron Franscell, "Last Bawdy House Trinkets Gone...", 1981.

60. Charles Hillinger, "Everybody Likes Dell...", 1973.

61. Telephone interview, Margaret Lee, Torrington, Wyoming by Larry K. Brown, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 5 November, 1993.

62. Bob Darrow and James Griffith interviews. During the mid-1870s the infamous, flame-haired madam with whom Dell obviously felt kinship operated a place of entertainment in a dugout along the Cheyenne-Deadwood stage route between Rawhide Buttes and Running Water (Lusk). According to Griffith, Dell did not attend the Featherlegs memorial dedication. During a subsequent trip to the site and nearby Darrow ranch, Griffith let Dell's Pekingese out of the house and the dog ran away. Dell was distraught. Because the animal had been trained to come when summoned with a whistle, Dell scoured the surrounding area for every available whistle, giving them to friends and customers who helped search for the pup.

country club, although she was never known to have played the golf course. Some claim that you could find her name at the top of nearly every charity drive donor list.<sup>64</sup>

63. "Jerry Dull Badly Hurt in Accident at Casper July 24," *Lusk Free Lance*, 31 July 1930, p.1. Dull was injured when a 1,600-pound oil well baling slipped from his truck, pinning his leg to the ground. Two bones were broken above the ankle, the joint was fractured and his foot required twenty stitches. The injured leg subsequently was amputated below the knee. Also, "Jerry Dull Dies of Heart Attack While Driving Sat." *Lusk Herald* 28 August 1955, p.1.

64. Ron Franscell, "Last Bawdy House Trinkets Gone...", 1981.

65. Red Fenwick, "Dell's Profession no Embarrassment ...the Madam was a Well-heeled Lady," *Denver Post*, 21 December 1980, p.51.

66. Charles Hillinger, "Everybody Likes Dell...", 1973; also Marla Bagne, "Red Light Days...", n.d. Dell's last paying customer, according to Bagne, came through the door in 1978, just three years before her death at age 93.

67. Loraine Fisher, Letter, 1993. Dell confined her travels to states in the American southwest and Mexico. She knew that her family, although suspicious of her activities, was never fully aware of her professional history or the scope of her business until they visited her in the hospital in 1980. During their previous visits Dell was always careful to shelter them from downtown Lusk, where they might learn about the true nature of her occupation. In fact, wrote Fisher, members of her family entered the Yellow Hotel only once prior to Dell's death. That occurred years earlier when Fisher's father -Dell's nephew- and his wife spent their honeymoon there, but only after Dell had cleared the establishment of girls and telltale signs.



*Dell, left, with her brother Charles' son's wife, Phyllis, at the Texas Trail Monument just east of Lusk and near Dell's ranch, nd.*

replace the one she left left in North Dakota. Dell had but one regret: she never had a child of her own.<sup>68</sup>

## *The Finale*

On August 4, 1979 the aging Dell tripped and fell on the sidewalk in front of her hotel and broke a hip. Following treatment at a Scottsbluff, Nebraska, hospital, she was returned to Lusk two weeks later where Dr. Kenneth Turner cared for her at the Niobrara County Memorial Hospital.<sup>69</sup> Once her health stabilized she was moved from her room in the medical ward into the nursing home wing where the staff described her as a model patient highly respected and warmly accepted.<sup>70</sup> But Dell had not lost her snap, and those who forgot that fact felt her sting. One well-intentioned matron who stopped by to read the Bible to her was told: "Get the hell out of my room ...and turn on the TV as you leave!"<sup>71</sup>

Despite the occasional flash of irascibility, Dell claimed in her clover years, "I wouldn't trade my life for anything. I'm glad of it. I've made a lot of money. Traveled the world. For me it's been a good life."<sup>72</sup> Good, indeed! Her estate

was valued at nearly \$1.3 million, making her one of the wealthiest self-made women in Wyoming.<sup>73</sup> But it ceased when the venerable madam succumbed to age in her small hospital room on election day, November 4, 1980. She was ninety-three. There was no memorial service. No one sent flowers. Her body was simply cremated and her ashes strewn in the winds that blew across the ranch land she loved so much.<sup>74</sup>

*Lusk will never be the same;  
our hearts will never mend  
God has gained an angel.  
Wyoming's lost a friend.*

68. Red Fenwick, "Dell's Profession no Embarrassment..." 1980.

69. Telephone interview, Dr. Ken Turner, Lusk, Wyoming, by Larry K. Brown, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 24 January 1994.

70. Interview, Wyoming Supreme Court Justice William A. Taylor, Cheyenne, Wyoming, by Larry K. Brown, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 24 January 1994.

71. *ibid.*; also telephone interview of Bruce Bergstrom by Larry K. Brown, Cheyenne, 3 January 1994. Bergstrom, who visited her in the hospital in 1980 said: "She did not recognize me. I had to tell her who I was. I tried to pry open her mind of memories of times gone by. About the time I thought I was making some progress, she announced to me -quite loudly- 'When does Bingo start?' End of conversation."

72. Charles Hillinger, "Everybody Likes Dell...", 1973.

73. *Last Will and Testament of Dell Burke*, 20 December 1979, Niobrara County Probate Docket #3-164, Lusk, Wyoming.

74. "Obituaries: Del [sic] Burke," *Lusk Herald*, 13 November 1980, p.4; *Certificate of Death, Mary Fisher Law aka Del [sic] Burke*, Niobrara County Probate Docket #3-164, Lusk, Wyoming 4 November 1980. Dell's death was attributed to pneumonia as a consequence of arteriosclerotic cardiovascular disease with congestive failure. According to the certificate, the interval between disease and death was two years.

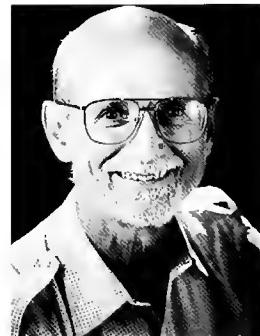
75. "Local Songwriter Pens Ode to Dell," *Wyoming Tribune-Eagle*, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 16 August 1981. Steve Cody, Nashville songwriter, wrote the lyrics and music to the tune entitled, "Dell Was a Lady," as a tribute to the madam. The song was recorded and released in October, 1981 by High Plains Records.

*In response to the Lusk booster club's efforts to promote their town,*

*Dell donated money to raise billboards along the highway.  
Though signs were not intended to promote individual businesses, town fathers felt that those who donated should receive recognition.*



**POSTSCRIPT:** Shortly after the sale of Dell's personal possessions and properties in 1981, a group of good-humored Cheyenne ladies initiated an informal social group which they call the "Dell Burke Memorial Auxiliary." In honor of her spirit and joie de vivre, they lunch together each month and take at least one out-of-town shopping trip each year. Their most celebrated get-together in honor of Dell is the Frontier Days Buckoff which they hold each January. For additional information about the "Dell Burke Memorial Auxiliary," you are invited to write: Sandy Pedersen, 420 Cherokee, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82001.



CRAIG PINDELL

ENTERING THE U.S. AIR FORCE WHERE HE SPENT THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS AS PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER. DURING HIS MILITARY CAREER HE GRADUATED FROM BOSTON UNIVERSITY IN 1970 WITH AN M.S. IN PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MASS COMMUNICATIONS AND LATER COMPLETED A SPECIAL GRADUATE PROGRAM IN MASS COMMUNICATIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA.

IN 1980 BROWN JOINED SUN EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION CO., THE OIL AND

LARRY K. BROWN (1936-), A FOURTH GENERATION JOURNALIST, EARNED A B.A. IN JOURNALISM FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA IN 1960 BEFORE

GAS ARM OF SUN COMPANY, INC., AS DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS. WHILE WORKING FOR SUN IN DALLAS HE EARNED GRADUATE CREDITS IN HISTORY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS. EIGHT YEARS LATER BROWN WENT TO WORK FOR THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION (AHA) AND IN 1988 MOVED TO CHEYENNE WHERE HE WAS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AHA-WYOMING, INC.

HIS WRITING CREDITS INCLUDE MORE THAN 800 NEWSPAPER, MAGAZINE AND ENCYCLOPEDIA ARTICLES. HE WROTE THE SCRIPTS FOR A TODAY SHOW AIRED IN 1979 BY NBC-TV AND A PRIME TIME SUNDAY BROADCAST THE FOLLOWING YEAR BY ABC-TV. SINCE 1992 HE HAS WRITTEN EXCLUSIVELY ABOUT WESTERN HISTORY INCLUDING TWO BOOKS TO BE PUBLISHED BY HIGH PLAINS PRESS. *The Hog Ranches of Wyoming: Liquor, Lust and Lies Under Sagebrush Skies* WILL

BE PUBLISHED THIS SPRING AND "You are Respectively Invited to Attend My Execution" IS PLANNED FOR LATE 1995. THE LATTER CONTAINS LITTLE-KNOWN STORIES OF SEVEN MEN WHO WERE LEGALLY EXECUTED IN WYOMING TERRITORY.

BROWN'S INTEREST IN DELL BURKE CAME AS A RESULT OF CONVERSATIONS WITH PEOPLE WHO KNEW THE LUSK MADAM, OR KNEW OF HER. IT IS HIS INTEREST IN PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO USUALLY ARE NOT GIVEN SPACE IN THE CHRONICLES OF HISTORY, THAT DRIVES HIM TO RESEARCH AND RECONSTRUCT THEIR LIVES. A WYOMING STATE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE VOLUNTEER, HE IS THE AUTHOR OF "IN OLD WYOMING," A REGULAR *Annals* FEATURE ON HISTORICAL PERSONALITIES. LARRY AND HIS WIFE FLORENCE HAVE FOUR GROWN CHILDREN AND RESIDE IN CHEYENNE.

*"...let him now speak, or else hereafter forever hold his peace."\**

How do you feel about what you've read in ANNALS? Is there some historical matter you have been wanting to talk to someone about? Do you want to comment?

Wyoming ANNALS is soliciting letters to the editor on any topic appearing in the magazine or relating to the history of Wyoming and the West. Letters should be approximately 250 words, preferably typewritten, and must be signed by you. They may be published in ANNALS at the discretion of the editor.

Direct your letters to: Editor, Wyoming ANNALS, 2301 Central Avenue, Cheyenne, WY 82002.

\*Solemnization of Matrimony, Book of Common Prayer

*Yours sincerely  
Paris Dow.*

*Handwritten excerpts from a June 9, 1930, letter written by Dell (Marie Dow) to her cousin Homer Cotterman.*



## Conversations with Historians

This is the second in a series of interviews with Wyoming historians. The last issue of *Annals* (Fall, 1994) featured University of Wyoming Professor Emeritus, Dr. T.A. Larson. This interview was conducted by *Wyoming Annals* editor, Mark Junge, on February 23, 1989 at the University of Wyoming Foundation Office on the campus in Laramie. The transcription was made by Kathy Rooney, Computer Programmer Analyst for the Computer Technology Division of the Wyoming State Department of Administration and Information.



RICHARD COLETTI, WYOMING STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

Gene Gressley (1931-) is controversial, to say the least. Currently involved in litigation wherein Gressley claims he was unlawfully terminated by the University of Wyoming, the former director of the University's American Heritage Center is fighting for his professional career and reputation. There is not much middle ground in the debate: you are either a Gressley supporter or detractor.

Apart from his current legal battle, Gressley has been a controversial figure at the University. He has been criticized for his penchant to collect everything. The documents and artifacts gathered during his 32-year, peripatetic search for history are seen as an eclectic assortment, not necessarily apropos of the history of Wyoming or even the West. Why, for example, is Robert Bloch's

original screenplay for "Psycho," in the AHC? Or an audition recording by Bing Crosby? Even more bizarre is an urn containing the ashes of Jean "Babe" London, the fat girl in Laurel and Hardy movies.

Not only the tons of material he brought to the University in semi trucks, but also the methods Gressley used during his collecting frenzy, have come under fire from those who claim he helped

obtain generous tax breaks for donors. He also has been criticized for amassing material without facilitating its access to researchers.

But he has his supporters. If it were not for Gressley there would be no American Heritage Center as we know it. The AHC building itself, containing 74,000 cubic feet of paper and 13,000 collections unearthed by Gressley from all over the country, could not have been built without him. His multitudinous contacts with influential and wealthy donors were crucial not only to obtaining a wealth of documentary material, but also to completion (1993) of the nineteen million dollar complex housing that trove. Designed by internationally-recognized architect Antoine Predock, the avant-garde building itself is controversial, a perfect match to the brouhaha and legal battle stirred up by the removal of Gressley from his position as director.

Drawing researchers from all over the world, the AHC is a stimulus to the Wyoming economy. In 1988 Gressley told interviewer Robert Bond: "We've achieved critical mass in a number of areas. No one can do a thorough job of research in the fields of livestock industry history, western literature, the history of aviation, conservation, the development of dude ranches or economic geology without consulting our archives."<sup>1</sup> Although no study of economic benefits has been conducted, researchers working in the areas of Wyoming and the West, mining, water development and popular culture recognize the importance of visiting the Center.

Ultimately, the documents and artifacts housed in the AHC will bear testimony to Gene Gressley's career and its importance to American history. As Gressley himself put it: "We're trying to collect for the future. One cannot know what will be useful. A lot of the

material we have collected at Wyoming will end up being worthless. There is going to be a lot of it, which is referred to now as 'dross,' that I bet will be extremely useful."<sup>2</sup>

**A**mong the records of foremost importance to Wyoming are those of the Wyoming Stock Growers, the American National



Cattlemen's Association, and the Wyoming Wool Growers and National Wool Growers Associations. The papers of Wyoming attorney and F.D.R. "trustbuster" Thurman Arnold are also stored in its cavernous concrete rooms. The mining industry is so well-represented that the collection has been called the most comprehensive history of oil exploration and production in the world. Oil development can be traced from the drilling of the first American well at Titusville, Pennsylvania in 1859, through the dissolution of the Standard Oil Trust in 1911, up to the present day. In 1987 the ARCO Coal Company donated fifty-six tons of Anaconda Minerals Company records valued at ten million dollars. Included among nearly two million documents are 56,000 geo-

logical maps. It is reputed to be the largest mining collection on the planet. Aviation, dude ranching, mountaineering, performing arts—these and many other subjects are boxed and shelved at the AHC.

Ultimately, Gene Gressley is a collector. It is what he enjoys most. Technically an archivist by profession, he is actually an historian by training and interest. His B.S. (Manchester College, Indiana, 1952), his M.A. (Indiana University, 1956) and his Ph.D. (University of Oregon, 1964) are all history degrees. His employment as Colorado Assistant State Historian (1954-56) and his work as Director of the American Heritage Center reflect a historical career. The awards he has won are historical awards. His eight books and more than two dozen articles relate to history. His professional affiliations are almost exclusively with history organizations, and in some he has served leadership positions, most notably that of President of the Western History Association (1985). One membership listed on Gressley's vita that stands apart from the others is the Cosmos Club in Washington, D.C. Begun in 1878 by John Wesley Powell, second director of the U.S. Geological Survey, the club limits its members to those chosen nationally. How appropriate for Wyoming's ubiquitous collector of curiosities.

It will take years for Wyoming citizens to realize what treasures are located within "Gressley's empire" as it has been called. Realization of their significance may not come in Gressley's lifetime. Regardless, the institution stands as an important repository for Wyomingites and others who labor in historical vineyards.

1. Robert Bond, "Bare Legs and Pinafores: The American Heritage Center," *Wilson Library Bulletin* (January, 1988): 54.

2. Bond, "Bare Legs and Pinafores," p.56.

● So, Gene, I've always found you to be an articulate, intelligent and witty person. Would you agree? Silence, Mark, silence. What can I say? We don't need the interview! (laughter) What do you want? Do you want when this was founded? The archives and all this?

● Yes, let's do that. When did you first come back here? Was it '56? It was '56, summer of '56 and the archives had been founded in September of '45.

● By whom? The first people to work here were Lola Homsher and Henryetta Berry. And the reason they established it was that Milward Simpson wanted a department of archives and western history at the University of Wyoming. He was chairman of the Board of Trustees and got hold of Duke Humphrey and said, "Let's get something going in western history down there." So Duke said "Fine, we'll do it." That's when it began. The department was under the library.

● How did Lola come into the picture? They advertised. And her uncle was Percy Metz. Does that mean anything to you? He was a district judge, and he recommended Lola and she got the job. I've forgotten what Lola did before she came here.

● Did she have a degree in history? Yes, she had an M.A. in history.

● So she was sharp, in other words. Oh yes, Lola was a bright lady. I'll tell you about it. Lola was an antiquarian, frankly, but in my estimation Lola was a first-rate archivist. She was very interested in local history. I would say even further she was interested in state history, but she really was fascinated with Albany County history. She was very much a local historian. She got some very valuable collections: a lot of Francis Warren's papers, the first section of George Washington Thornton Beck's papers, J.P. Schwoob who owned the Cody Trading Post. She got a lot of things like that. She and Henryetta Berry together accumulated about eighty collections during her five years here, and then Dean [Krakel] finished up with about another two hundred collections over his six or seven years.

● Who was this? Dean Krakel. He came in '49. Lola and Henryetta left in '49.

● He was working for Lola? No, excuse me. Lola worked with the librarian, N. Orin Rush, at the time. There was an uproar and she left and went over to Cheyenne. There was another uproar and she left there, as you remember, and went up to Alaska. There was an uproar there and she retired. By that time Percy had willed her one ranch and Lola didn't need to work any more.

● Would you say, Gene, that she was the first person in Wyoming to really do any serious... Collecting? Yes, I think that's probably true. Now, I say that without knowing the history of the growth of the Wyoming State Historical Society. But they did very little, as I recall, still do. I don't know who was collecting for them in the '30s, if anybody. I'm not even sure if I know who was collecting for them in the '40s till Lola went over there.

● I believe that their publications used to be called "Collections of the Historical Society." I don't know about the physical material. They obviously acquired things over the years. They had them when they were in the Capitol building before the turn of the century. But we're talking about rock collections and things that were donated, that came down from world fairs, expositions and whatnot. That's another story in itself. But was Lola put into the library as sort of a western history acquisitions head? Yes, she was to form the department. They had nothing. So she began the department by taking trips. In fact, her travel budget was the same as mine, interestingly enough.

● Which was...? \$400 a year. It never changed up through Krakel's tenure. I'll tell what changed it. That's another story. It changed in 1960. A donor changed it. Anyway, by 1956 when I arrived here there were 284 collections, and when I left the AHC in 1988 there were over 13,000. When I arrived the best one was the Wyoming Stock Growers Collection. Still is one of the best. They had Joe O'Mahoney's papers which took one room. There were three rooms in all. You know where the Rocky Mountain Herbarium is today? In the Aven Nelson Building? That's where we were. We had half of those quarters, in one corner.

● What about the library? The library was below us or around us. The Law School moved out just as we moved into the third floor. Jim Ranz was the librarian. He later became Vice President of Academic Affairs. He and (President) William Carlson fell out and Ranz left, became a librarian, just retired a year ago at Kansas. Extremely able person I think. And I always thought Bill Carlson was very competent.

● How did Lola and Ranz get along? Lola was gone before Ranz came. Krakel was here. Krakel came in '49. Ranz came in '55 and I came in '56. Ranz was a very powerful influence on my



life because he taught me how to get along in the academic world. And believe me, I've learned a lot more since. Ranz also did something else that I didn't recognize at the time. Ranz protected me and at the same time gave me freedom to do what I wanted to. He tried to give me as much support as he could, although he couldn't get any more travel budget out of Duke until I proved that I could get more collections.

In the first year we received something like eighty collections, which was one-third of what had been accomplished from 1945 to '56. I discovered that the great technique was to start writing letters, and I wrote letters like crazy. I wrote letters to everybody. (laughter) Another thing I did in collecting, which so many people don't do, is to pay attention to people's grandchildren. Now what I mean by that is, they're going to write about what Susie's doing. And if you don't reply and say that Susie's done a great job in the eighth grade they're going to be upset because they think you've ignored Susie. And if you've ignored Susie why would you want Grandfather's papers?

What you do is develop a friendship with each of these donors. You write them and you keep up the contact. To this day I will send clippings to people.

You have to become a friend. If you don't become a friend of potential donors they aren't interested in the University, and if they aren't interested in the University obviously they aren't going to give anything to it. People give to people! They don't give to institutions. This is something many do not understand. In many, many institutions they think collections should walk in the door. They don't. People are not going to give you something just because you're the University of Wyoming, but if you cultivate them, work with them, or write them and plead with them to help you build, they will.

I remember the first years I went off to New York in '57 and '58. That was one of the loneliest feelings in the world because you had to pound those streets asking for material and the constant question was, "Where the hell's Wyoming?" ..."University of Wyoming?" You're talking to Yale graduates,

Harvard graduates.

●*This brings us to the point I was hoping we could get to, and it took us a while. Can you remember, Gene, the very first thing you ever collected?* Yes, I remember the first thing I ever asked for. It was a photographic collection. It was Frank Meyer's collection in Rawlins. I went in to see Frank Meyer, and I was so insecure that I didn't quite know how to come out with: "Would you give us the photos?" So we had a nice visit. (laughter) I walked around the block and I think Frank wondered what was going on. But that was all right. We visited some more but I never did get around to asking him for the collection. So I walked out, had lunch, and came back after lunch and said: "You know what I really came in here for?" He said, "No tell me." I said, "I really want your photos!" He said, "WHAT!! (Laughter). I said, "I mean your historic photos." ..."Oh," he said "yeah, I'll think about that." He thought about it and we ended up getting them twenty years later from his son! (laughter)

●*It took you that long to court him?* Oh, yes. Now, this is another thing. This is a major point that people do not understand. For many donors it takes a lot of courting. They must feel that you're a friend, that you can walk in the door anytime. They aren't going to turn it over to you the first day that you walk up to them. This is one trouble with a lot of foundation work. Too many people in the foundation world—and I'm not speaking of Wyoming, I'm speaking in general—I listen to fundraisers say: "We want a check." The response is "So does everyone!" (laughter) It just doesn't work that way. You've got to cultivate them. They've got to be interested in your program. Where's your market? Why should anybody give to the University? Al Gordon gave us \$250,000 for the American Heritage Center. Why did he? Because at one time his father grew up on the Laramie Plains. Furthermore, Al Gordon in the late '40's owned the Laramie electric light plant. That's why he gave us the money. He had an attachment to Wyoming. He was Chairman of the Board of Kidder-Peabody. Why should the chairman of the board of Kidder Peabody give us anything? He shouldn't! There has to be a connection when you go for money.

Not so much for papers. You can sell an archive as a repository for papers because you're doing about as much for them as they're doing for you. They realize that when they die their files are just going to be tossed. They might wish Harvard had asked for them, but Wyoming asked for them so ..."we'll send them to Wyoming." That's another thing that I come back to time and again. Harvard isn't going to get them, even with their prestige, if they don't go out and ask. I mean, Harvard may not give a damn. As one man said to me when he gave his files, "So nice to deal with a University that writes me for something besides money!"

**"What you do is  
develop a friendship  
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a friend..."**

You talk about a long courtship. This is one of my hitchhiking stories. I went back East for the first time in the fall of 1958. Well, it was really the winter. I went by train, first to Chicago, then I hitchhiked in the Midwest. The reason I wanted to hitchhike in the Midwest is pretty obvious. I thought it would be a lot easier to hitchhike in the Midwest in December than it would be in the West. I mean I'm not that dumb. (laughter) And we had to stretch that travel budget of \$400.00.

●*Poor, maybe, but not dumb.* I was picked up by a semi truck on Route 20, I never will forget. I took Route 20 because it goes through Bellevue, Ohio, my hometown. We were going through western New York and hit something like I hit this morning—dense fog—only it was a blizzard. He went off of the road into the ditch and I crawled out of the cab, stood around and half froze to death trying to get him out of there. Well, I couldn't do anything, of course. We had to get a wrecker and I went on my way. Got to New York. But where did I stay in New York? I stayed at the Plymouth Hotel. You never heard of the Plymouth Hotel? I hope you haven't. I think it was on 44th and 7th. As I always say to everybody, it took me years to figure out why the girls were so friendly in the lobby. (laughter) That's what I was in! I shall never forget George Rentschler who had the Henry Farny Collection which we now have in the AHC. That's the first time I saw One Sutton Place, South. He said to me, "Gressley, you're where?" And I said "At the Plymouth Hotel." I got this roar: "I'll be damned!" (laughter) I didn't understand what he meant. The Plymouth wasn't elegant and it kinda smelled, but I thought, "What the heck." I ate at the Brass Rail or something like that. You remember the Brass Rail?

●*No.* I ate there, it was about like Horn and Hardart's. (coin-operated cafeteria) Well, you see, in those days we had \$9.00 in-state and \$11.00 out-of-state per diem, and nobody got expenses. And I mean nobody, not even the coach! Jacoby (UW Athletic Director, Red Jacoby) and I were the first two from the University to go on expenses.

●*You're back at the Plymouth Hotel.* I think it's gone now, but I'm not sure. I'll tell you how I got to know George Rentschler. You'll know this book, I'll bet, by Robert Taft: "Artists and Illustrators of the Old West"? It was put out by Scribners, but it's been reprinted since. It's still one of the best volumes on that subject. In there is a chapter on Henry Farny and in a footnote in that chapter it states: "The largest privately held collection of Henry Farny in the United States is in George Rentschler's home at One Sutton Place, South, New York". Well I came to that footnote. I thought: "Hah!" So I wrote him and said, in essence: "Would you like to place your Farny Collection at the University of Wyoming?" I got back this charming little note which said, "I never thought about it." ...I wonder why? (laughter) ... "But when you come East sometime, come visit me." Now, George recognized someone trying to do something, and who had brass. Yes, he recognized both. I had caught his curiosity. No one had ever done this to him before. (laughter) I went back over there to see him that evening for cocktails.

●*Describe One Sutton Place, South.* OK, I can describe it. The room I went into is like the one that used to be my office. It's a reproduction of One Sutton Place, South. All those paintings in that room are what I first saw as a kid in 1958. Now, those paintings did not arrive until 1978, almost two decades later. That is the point I have been making. It takes time. I would see George Rentschler—and I still go east in December—every time I went East. First of all it was for cocktails. I can still see him on all fours, going through those covered bookshelves trying to find Scotch! (Laughter). George was delightful, really a very wonderful person and, incidentally, a remarkable person. There were three Rentschler brothers that all came out of Lima, Ohio. George ended up chairman of the board of Baldwin Locomotive. Another, Frederick, became the founder of United Aircraft. And the last, Gordon, was the first president of the First National City Bank of New York, which is now Citibank. Incredible family who, incidentally, personally never had any records. They all threw them out. George said: "I don't want some damn nosey historian looking through what I did." (laughter) He made sure. "Farny's, that's fine, but not my records, Gressley. You'll never get them and nobody else will either!" That was that. He made that very clear to begin with, because I later asked about them again.



The Sutton Place "look-alike" office at the University of Wyoming. 1989

Over the years there followed cocktails, then dinner and cocktails, then stories. George hunted in the Wind Rivers for twenty-one years and that was why he was interested in Wyoming. As I say, there's got to be a connection, usually with the West or with Wyoming some way, especially when you get into this league. He hunted in Wyoming until he had heart trouble and couldn't come out any more, but he loved to hear Wyoming stories. That's all he wanted me to talk about. His poor wife would travel off to bed about 10:30 and he would insist, and I mean insist, on my staying. I would try to back out of there about 9:30 or 10:00, and I wouldn't get out, the last few years of his life, until one, two, sometimes three in the morning.

●*He would just drain you.* He'd drain me. He would tell some of his hunting stories. Then he would tell some army stories, I mean the First World War, and on, and on and on. You just became a buddy at that point. I was one of several. His sons still remark that they knew when Gressley came to town it would be a long evening.

●*You know it seems to me, Gene, that the way you describe the story, if this is a typical or somewhat typical....* It is typical of the length of time is what I'm saying. It takes a decade or two. Most collections don't just come in the first time you ask. Some you can acquire the first day or the first time you walk in if people are interested. The Moncrieffe Papers are an example. I wrote to Oliver Wallop. That was one of our first collections. By the time I got to Sheridan I was a little more forceful. Besides, I'd written to Oliver and said: "Would you give the Moncrieffe Papers to us?" It was during the first field trip I took. And he said, "Sure."

I wrote to forty people on my first field trip and got answers from about six. I thought, "What goes here? Doesn't anybody write in Wyoming? Don't they like me? What is going on?" I discovered later why no one nobody bothered writing. I mean, you let them know you are coming. That's fine. That's all that is necessary.

●*But the latchstring is always out?* Yes. They weren't unfriendly. They just didn't see any reason to reply: "We'll be glad to see you." (laughter)

●*That was taken for granted.* Yes. I didn't know that at the time. I didn't think that was the way you did it. I was much more formal, believe it or not.

●*You must have had a lot of patience because in this situation you were a young man, you were after something, and you must have been constantly tempted to say: "Let's talk about, you know, what I'm here for."* I have patience with donors. I didn't have patience with my colleagues at the University. (laughter) No, I always wanted to push faster than anybody else around here wanted to. I remember Ranz shaking his head one day at me saying, "Gene, we can't do everything overnight." I wanted to double the staff. I wanted my own station wagon for travel.

## ***I wrote to forty people on my first field trip and got answers from about six. I thought, "What goes here? Doesn't anybody write in Wyoming? Don't they like me? What is going on?"***

In those days you used to be able to go over and see the President directly. When I was a lowly employee in the library that impressed me. Ranz went over with me the first three or four times. The last time—you'll love this—he said "Gressley, I'm tired of being frustrated in there. You go by yourself." (laughter)

●*Who was president?* Duke Humphrey. He was president when I arrived in '56, to about '65. He was very formative for me, too. I liked Duke. A lot of people didn't. But Duke was one to give you your head. If he thought you were doing something, and basically were shooting very straight with him, he'd support you as much as he could. He groused a lot about it but he would give you the support.

I remember one time when I had a job offer—this is neither here nor there—he asked what the difference was. I've always said I went from \$8,800 to \$11,000 in fifteen minutes. Now in a sense it incensed me because, you see, that's the only way you got money, and still do a lot of times, is "blackjacking" people. It seems to me that they should recognize their people and try to bring them along. It's one thing to offer a person \$1,000 difference, but that doesn't happen either. I mean, let's face it, if Harvard had called I wouldn't be at Wyoming.

●*Gene, have you ever heard of a boss going to the employee and saying, "How would you like a raise?"* Oh no, no. What I mean is that they should bring you along without asking whether you want a raise or not, but raise-wise they should make sure that you're at market level.

●*If they want you.* If they want you. If they don't want you, no. But you see, if he valued me so much in fifteen minutes (laughter) obviously I was more valuable before.

● Let's get back to your collecting. You said in the first year you increased the collections by eighty or something like that. Yes, in other words, we increased the size of our entire archive by a third the first year I was here.

● Was it in the job description that Gene Gressley shall go out and be this indefatigable collector? They had no idea what could be accomplished, and neither did I.

● Well where did it come from then? Inside of you? I mean, did you just see some opportunities and went... Basically I am a collector. I guess that's all you have to say. I like collecting, I like people. You put the two together and you're gonna build. I can't say that I came here with a vision to build a major archive. I didn't. I do recall standing, when I first came here, looking out of my office windows to the west as the sun was setting. It was beautiful! It still is one of the most beautiful sights overlooking the Snowies [Snowy Range]. But I thought to myself, "Well Gressley, you've got no place to go but up." And that was true. (laughter)

● It was an emotional scene? Yes, it was an emotional scene. On the other hand, everybody says "Boy, what a gamble you took coming to Wyoming!" I reply, "I didn't take any gamble. The University took as much of a gamble as I did." I was a 25 year-old kid who'd done nothing. The University didn't have much to offer, admittedly, but it was equally matched.

● What was your first acquisition as a collector? The first actual acquisition, I think, was the Moncrieffe Papers.

● Where you could actually see something? Yes. And I never will forget that, either. Oliver Wallop was up in the attic of the Polo Ranch house—you know, these holes that they have in the attic—tossing boxes down. Well these were orange letter boxes, and they had been up there for years. So they had layers of dust over them. And as each box came down I caught it and the dust rolled up over me. Oliver got tickled. He thought this was the funniest thing to see me in a suit with all this dust rolling over me. He had jeans on. He got to laughing and damned near came down through the hole. (laughter) I was laughing below. I could hardly stand up to catch them. Oh, it was a scene! We had thirty some boxes down, and then I went back to Sheridan which was then seventeen, eighteen miles, took a shower, put on another suit and came back for dinner.

● Did you know when you first started out what "papers" meant? If somebody said "Yes, I'll give you my "papers," when you got this stuff were they papers? I mean, were they memoirs? Journals? Diaries? Well, for instance, the Moncrieffe Collection was practically all ledgers and correspondence. But sure. You know, the golden idea in my mind was a 1849-50 overland diary. This is what I had in mind as the piece de resistance of Western Americana.

● This is like the guy who goes to an auction, buys a picture, hopes to take the back off and find an old... OK, I see. I haven't really thought about that question, but I can tell you the emotional thing that happened to me when I first came here. I kept hearing about the Coe collection and how we'd lost it.

● William Robertson Coe. Yes. We lost it because Coe offered it to Wyoming, but Wyoming refused to build a \$75,000 building to house it. And this was, you see, 1938, 1939. Well, I don't chastise Wyoming as a lot of people did. After all, \$75,000 was a hell of a lot of money in the Depression. And they had needs: dormitories, classrooms. \$75,000 for a rare book library was a lot of money. Doesn't sound like much today.

It would have been extravagant. Nevertheless, the Coe Collection at Yale is really Wyoming history. The basic portion of the Coe Collection is the Nathaniel Thomas Collection. He was Episcopal Bishop of Wyoming. Nathaniel Thomas collected early Wyomingana, and particularly Western Americana, for thirty years before Coe bought the Thomas Library. And that collection today is worth, what? Several million? It's priceless, really priceless. There's the Withington Catalog of the Coe Collection. I don't know if you've ever seen it.

I sat down with it one evening and looked through it. I was almost in tears when I completed it because it's magnificent! Here you have the Isaac Bard diaries, Henry Freeman material, on, and on, and on and on. This is priceless Wyomingana, and I knew enough Wyoming history at that point to realize what we had really missed. Now that's the kind of thing I really wanted. But obviously we couldn't get it.

So what do you go after? You go after twentieth century material because that's



available. And that's what archivists, in collecting in this nation, are still missing. They're not collecting the present. Fifty years from now someone will be wondering why they didn't.

● *So this is...* Yes, this is a basic premise of my collecting. I headed for what I could get. We had the Wyoming Stock Growers Association, but we didn't have many individual ranches. Well why not? Well, they're twentieth century, most of them. So what? You've got the Diamond Ranch and all ...it goes on, and on and on. An enormous number.

● *Do you think you're one of the first people to recognize that prejudice in collecting?* Yes I do. I'm one of the first western historians, frankly, to emphasize the twentieth century in Western Americana.

● *You must have encountered some opposition, then, in what you were collecting.* Oh, yes. I always said I started building a head of steam but nobody quite realized it until it really broke loose. Then's when all the jealousy began, all the backbiting and "Gressley's empire's gonna topple." The common thing I hear today, and I've heard it for years, is: "We've got to control Gressley somehow." I've often wondered, "Why do you have to control anybody if they're doing their job?" ..."Well, because they get in everybody else's way," or ..."He spends too much money." How can I spend money I don't have? I mean, either they give you the budget or they don't give you the budget.

● *Didn't that stick in somebody's craw in the library? The fact that they had to break apart some of their budget for you?* Actually, what happened is, the department outshone the library. When the librarian would go to conventions he would hear about the collections here but he wouldn't hear anything about the library. Well, there's no reason he should have. There wasn't any library here. Now that's much different today. We've been pouring in millions for the last several years. I'm thinking we're well on our way to a decent library. We don't have a great one—they keep telling where we are in comparison to everybody else—but we have a significant one. For instance, we're taking a lot more periodicals than Boulder is [as of 1989]. That people don't realize.

● *We're getting off the track. I want to go back a little bit to your collecting days because these have always been my favorite stories. There is a story you tell about carrying a suitcase, a satchel...* Oh yes. Let me tell you. This was because we didn't have any money for travel in those days. It was about 1958 or '59 when I went down to Texas. This is another aspect of collecting in my estimation. What do you collect when you come to Wyoming? You collect twentieth century history. But we were basically collecting what I would call a "cowboy and Indian archive" then.

I wanted to expand it and I wanted to get more cattle material, but I wanted to "discover" oil. I wanted water. I didn't think about journalism, and performing arts and all that. That came later. But I wanted to obtain the economic history of this region. No one had collected any history on the oil industry, if you can imagine that. No one! No one in this region had. To this day that AHC archive in petroleum history is way ahead of everybody in the nation. We have the letters of George Henry Bissell. Did you ever hear of George Henry Bissell?

● *No.* He financed the first well in the United States. In Pennsylvania. The Drake Well in 1859. We bought the Bissell Papers for \$15,000 by calling Frank Prior who had been Chairman of the Board of AMOCO, well, Standard of Indiana. His first job was in Midwest [Wyoming]. He was out of Stanford and in the '60s was living in Palm Beach. I asked him for \$7,500—I became a lot more brazen later—and he said, "Gressley, I'll give you \$7,500 if you get \$7,500 out of the AMOCO Foundation." So I called the AMOCO Foundation. I can still hear the voice of the public relations man at the other end of the line saying "Gressley, I'm getting so tired of this." This had been the third one I had propositioned. (laughter)

● *Was anybody in the nation collecting oil stuff?* Nobody still is, really, in any significant way. Now, there are oil museums. There's a marvelous one at Titusville. The Permian Basin in Texas has a wonderful oil museum: drilling rigs, and displays and all of that sort of thing. But actual archival material, we're still one of the few that are really collecting in a major way, or we were.

For instance, we have the 1911 dissolution records of Standard Oil Trust. I mean, that is one of the major archival collections in oil history! They were sitting in New York, there for the asking. Just sitting in the warehouse.

● *How did you find out about it?* I just wrote. I wondered where they were. It wasn't hard to obtain petroleum material because you had little competition. Ordinarily it should have never come to us.

● *Were the oil men sort of flattered by the fact that you should even ask?* Not really. They weren't very interested, to be honest. I discovered most busi-



nessmen do not become interested in archival material until they're in their sixties and can appreciate it. Because before that they're too interested in economically surviving, keeping their company going. Percy Spencer was a perfect example of that. When I first saw Percy Spencer he was in his, oh, I think mid-sixties. He came out of Cody, Wyoming. He was Chairman of the Board of Sinclair. Percy was the head of the Republican Party in Wyoming during the '30s. He was an extremely able lawyer and a very charming man. He came out of his office to greet me and you would have thought you were the King of Siam. I can see why he got where he was. He just flattered you. I was bug-eyed, and he brought me in and sat me down. I remember at the time him saying "Gene, come to me ten years from now. I haven't got time to consider whether you should have the Sinclair records at this time, but then I'll consider it." I did, but by that time they'd thrown out the files. That's another story. That's what happens.

But back to your Texas hitchhiking story. When you had \$400 in the travel budget you had to go out and stay out because the biggest expense was travel fare. So I went for six weeks at a time, two years in a row. One time I left Joyce with a five year-old who had chickenpox, and a newborn baby. She's never forgiven me or forgotten that one, either.

●*Did that bother you?* It didn't bother me as much as it should have bothered me. I wasn't mature enough. I was too interested in what might be in Texas. The only guy that ever went to Texas with great anticipation for paper. (laughter)

●*Where were you headed?* Dallas, Texas. I went through Kansas, stopped off and incidentally interviewed the man that did the first drilling for the British in the Salt Creek Oil Field. He died three years later, but that's why I had this tape recorder along. I had an old Ampro, forty-pound tape recorder, one of these old accordion brief cases—you know the old type that bulge out the bottom—and two suitcases. This is the way I traveled. You're gone for six weeks, you gotta have a lot of stuff, especially then because I was doing oral history. I later quit that—which is too bad—just because I didn't have the time. But I taped many pioneers of the early oil industry. The big problem was that I didn't know enough to ask them the right questions. I let them tell their stories when, if I'd known enough, I could have interjected more questions and collected more history.

●*But maybe that was the best way to approach it in the long run.* I think if we read these oral history guide books, I did what a lot of amateurs do, which is, I took the easy way out. I just set the mike up saying, "Begin at the beginning" and went from there. You know what secondary recovery is, and what tertiary recovery is. I learned this from them. Oil people were very good to me. People were, in general, but they were extremely good in educating me in geology. I didn't know one formation from another. I learned them, but I didn't know them at that time.

Anyhow, I was outside Dallas. I had this little row of luggage and I was standing at the head of it hitchhiking. This '57 Chevy—I remember it had those fins on it—pulled up and the driver loaded all this luggage in his trunk. That's why, he said, he picked me up. He said, "God, I couldn't be scared of a man that's got four major pieces of baggage and dressed in a suit." He said, "I was just curious what the hell this was." (laughter) So we were going down the highway and I told him what I was doing. He was intrigued and kept asking questions. He poked at me on this, and he poked at me on that, and my background, and he asked me as many questions as Mark Junge has. It went on and on. When we came to some second-rate, fleabag hotel in Houston—I can't remember the name of it but we couldn't afford anything else—he got all that baggage out on the sidewalk and shook my hand. I shall never forget his parting words: "Gressley," he said "all I can tell you is if you ever get out of a job at the University of Wyoming, Lone Star Steel can do a helluva lot better for you!" (laughter) And he was right. They could have, up until the depression of the oil industry a few years ago. He had recognized another thing about collecting: what you've got to be if you're a collector is a salesman. You always have to sell in life, in anything you do.

●*"Keep talking" is the motto.* Yes, keep it going. That's in labor negotiations, too. I asked the vice president of Illinois Bell once what his advice was to kids growing up. I was just curious, just throwing out a question. He looked at me and said, "Gene, when you get in labor negotiations, the thing you do is always keep talking. Don't let the conversation pause. If you hit a dead end try to run it, and just keep going and keep going, and keep confrontation out if it if you can. You often can't, but try to just get the other party to respond, constantly. Constantly work, work." He said, "It wears you down, it wears them down, but eventually you do find some common ground that you can wiggle

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through, and once you hit it you grab it."

● You had a proclivity for talk. You were glib. And you're an opportunist. I don't mean that in a derogatory sense at all. I'm not defensive at all.

● So you had the two qualities it took to build up what some people have referred to as, and you're probably aware of it: "Gressley's Empire." (laughter) Oh, yes.

● I'll tell you right now. This is my point of view and this will go down for posterity, too. I think you've done the State of Wyoming a great service. Of course, in the paper you've been lauded for doing that very thing. But I think it takes, don't you—after looking back at all this—a person who not only is talkative and "hail fellow well met," but someone who sees opportunity? Oh, sure. And also a certain amount of guts. To put yourself out on a limb. I mean, let's face it, it was presumptuous to walk into George Rentschler's Sutton Place apartment asking for his collection.

● It's like going to Mars! Yes, well, it's very intimidating. What's an archivist from Wyoming trying to pull? And that's why, as I look back, Rentschler wasn't about to do anything for me that first visit. By the end of those visits he would not only have given me that collection, I think he would have given the University a lot more. This is where I was stupid in not realizing it.

● I'm kind of curious—this is for my personal interest only—were you proud of the fact that after a while you could approach these bigshots, these giants of the industry, and ask them point blank: "Listen, this is what I'd like" ...? No, I don't think I ever really felt proud. What I did feel after a while was extremely confident. You know, I would literally walk up to anybody and ask for almost anything. I don't like raising funds and that's a problem. But I think even that, eventually, I could do. I'm not interested, really, in doing it. I'm doing it because I've got to, to preserve the Center if we can keep it afloat. But it's not because I like doing it. It is uncomfortable, frankly.

● What's the difference between collecting dollars and collecting collections? I've always figured that when you collect collections you're doing maybe as much for the person you ask as you're doing for the University. I've never yet figured out how you're doing anything for a person when you take a check, especially if there is no tax advantage.

● And also, isn't yours a historical request? Yes. Everybody's asking for dollars from a donor but not everybody's asking for papers. This is why I told you about the donor who said, "Thank god, it's nice to talk to somebody from a University that just doesn't want a check from me."

● You told me a story one time about going up to the door and a woman answered the door in a bathrobe. Yes, and do I remember that one. (laughter) This occurred in Great Falls, Montana. I was after the papers of a political figure who Montanans will know, who was quite a liberal in his day. Later he became a conservative and married this young gal who I didn't know was a young gal.

● Who was the guy, by the way? I would rather not say. I went out to see her one Saturday morning, called her up, asked if I could come out to see her and set an appointment for 10 o'clock. There was a sprinkler system on the front lawn. I went over the hose, came up to the door and rang the bell, and she appeared in what I shall best describe as a very frilly negligee. (laughter) Well, you may not believe this, but Gressley's not that worldly, never has been. I simply don't know how to handle situations like this. (laughter)

● Never known as a philanderer? Nope, never. I don't expect anybody to believe this, but I never even thought of it. Anyway, I took one look and I was so aghast—at ten o'clock on Saturday morning—all I could do was say, and I gasped out, "I'll come back when you get dressed!" (laughter) I bolted down the stairs, tripped on the sprinkler, slid across the grass in the mud, fell on my face, got up ...and she was roaring. I could hear laughter behind me. I was laughing, too. I stumbled around the car, got in and went back to the hotel to clean up. Yes, that was one visit I shall never forget. Needless to say, I never called her again. And that was a mistake because I think probably I could have had the files. (laughter)

● In other words, not only were you not a philanderer, you stayed away from it like the plague. Yes, because I always ...here's one thing: I never got drunk on the road. I always tried to conduct myself properly because I was representing the University.

● Well what's wrong with that? I think that's good. I don't think it's bad. But I don't think anyone would believe it. It sounds too Boy Scoutish. Too, I think you destroy yourself when you do that. I didn't want anybody to say, "I saw Gressley with some gal up in a Sheridan Motel or I saw Gressley...." Nobody's ever been able to say this.

● Tell me the story about Babe. Babe London. Why do we have her ashes?

● Yes. How did her urn of ashes, her last mortal remains end up on your shelf? What I'm saying is, you collected everything from soup to nuts. Right there it is!

● This copper, brass looking box? Yes, yes, that's an urn. Jean London. Well, that was her last married name.

● "L.J.E. Boutelli... (reading the name on the urn). Yes, she was married to Boutelli.

● (continues reading) "...Boutelli, age 79 years, 3 months, 1 day, cremated December 5, 1980 at Chapel of the Pines Crematorium, 1604 South Catalina Street at Venice Boulevard, Los Angeles, California, zip code." Why are these in your office? OK, I'll tell you about Babe. Babe London is a fun story. When we started collecting performing arts one of the people I ran onto was Babe London. She used to be the "fat girl" in Laurel and Hardy comedies. She had fallen on hard times. I don't want to make it into a tragic story, but by the age of 35 or 40 she was through acting because there's only so many roles for corpulent actresses. She just ran out of roles. But it isn't one of these morbid decline stories. She worked in a department store as a sales clerk, and I don't what all, but she kept herself alive. She didn't have much money but she wasn't impoverished. She got into the Motion Picture and Country Home which is a retirement home in Los Angeles where you don't have to pay if you've been in the motion picture industry. I wrote for her papers so she sent a whole raft of stuff in. She said, "I'll will you everything, Gene, when I die." She did! We were her only family. That's why we ended up with her ashes. She didn't want them buried in Forest Lawn. She wanted somebody to have them that would care for her.

We have another, a famous couple, who went out shopping for urns to put their ashes in—bookend urns so their ashes would be useful. Just wouldn't be sitting up there. You'd know them if I told you. They're in performing arts, too. And for the same reason: they have no children. What the University becomes for them is sort of a surrogate family.

Babe London, incidentally, never saw the University of Wyoming. But this illustrates again how you have to build. Now, not with all of them do you build up an emotional connection. She willed us everything. The \$1,800 dollars she had left, her purses, her shoes, her dresses—everything came in.

● That brings up another point, Gene. You started getting away from the cowboy and Indian, Western Americana stuff. You said you went to oil. You went into things like water, reclamation, mining. The mining thing was big. Mountaineering, the performing arts, journalism.

● How did you get into performing arts? I got into performing arts this way. Maybe you knew Jim Welke. He was head of our film program for a while. Now he's at Central Florida University. Incidentally, he really fell into it because Disneyland began expanding when he went there and now Disney is using their program. Their sound stage is incredible. They would do Hollywood proud. And it's right at Orlando, right next to EPCOT Center. Disney is just using Central Florida as their lab. They're financing professors, financing travel, financing everything. He's got it made. Five people he's adding next year and they've got thirty in the department already. Couldn't happen to a better person, incidentally. He's a very able administrator and a very decent human being.

He came over to my office one day—this was about 1965—and said: "Gressley, you're out here collecting all this junk on oil and water. Why aren't you collecting material on film?" I said "Well, I never thought of it." So one afternoon I met with Irving Wallace. You know who that is, of course, or do you?

● He's an author. Yes. And Mike Kanin who brought Rashomon to the United States. Fay Kanin, who was his wife, became president of the Academy of Motion Pictures. Composers and lyricists Alan and Marilyn Bergman and four or five others—they were all in Wallace's poker game. This is how it began. I just said, "We would like to collect in the performing arts." The response was, "Well, you know there are a couple of other universities out here, UCLA and USC, who are doing this." Then they laughed and said, "Gene, they're not doing a very good job. The material is in their backyard so they aren't very interested." That afternoon there were twenty contacts suggested as potential donors and we got half of them. Now that has never happened to me before or since. You never hit fifty per cent. From my letters, mailings and personal contacts I used to run about eighteen to twenty per cent. Everybody said that was fabulous. Direct mail usually brings about six to seven per cent. But direct mail is usually asking for money. You don't get that high a rate. Collecting is just like anything else: wealth begets wealth. One producer or writer heard of us, then another, and it went on and on until today we

**"Gressley, you're out here collecting all this junk on oil and water."**

**Why aren't you collecting material on film?"**

have, what?—over three hundred collections.

The music collection side of the performing arts was another tale. Henry King was a director. He directed Tyrone Power pictures, etc., etc. I can still see him standing in his home on Carla Ridge overlooking L.A. It was a beautiful spot. We were talking about the composer who wrote *Hi Lilli*, *Hi Lo*, Bronislaw Kaper. I met Kaper at a party and King said, "Oh Brownie's a marvelous guy." Then, as I was discussing this further with him, King was saying what a great talent Kaper had. I thought: "Why aren't we collecting film music?" So I started collecting film music, and between Kaper and Bill Lava we were in contact with some sixty film composers in a short time. You never heard of Lava, but he was a "B" grade film composer. The best one of all was Adolph Deutsch. Adolph Deutsch's last film score was for *The Apartment*. Do you remember *The Apartment* with Jack Lemmon?

That was his last score. Deutsch used to come over to Old Baldy Club in Saratoga. So I wrote to Deutsch who was then in Palm Desert and said, "Would you be willing to contribute your material?" No response. This is another clue. I wrote him about a year later. No response. I wrote him six months later and said: "You've ignored my first two letters so I don't expect you answer this one, but I'm trying to get to you." Response: he was almost laughing in the letter. He said "Gressley, OK, come out and see me. We'll discuss this." And we got his whole collection. Adolph Deutsch had such a reputation out in the film music colony that it attracted others to us.

They had a party for Wyoming at their home in Palm Desert. I shall never forget. They brought in all the people that I wanted to talk to. I've never forgotten Adolph or Diane Deutsch for their graciousness and generosity to this day. Remarkable people. Very interesting. One of the few people that we ever contacted this way. I've gone to breakfasts, I've gone to brunches, I've gone to dinners where people will select friends of theirs to come and hear the Wyoming story.

●*I'll bet your eyes got big as you saw these people, and were introduced to them, going "Oh, my goodness! This is a gold mine." Maybe like a kid in a candy store.* (Quietly) I can't really say I did. My point in all of this is that I became very comfortable with "reputations" because you don't let them overawe you. I learned that very quickly. They did overawe me when I began. I was scared. I told you about Frank Meyer.

The first Fortune 500 businessman I ever saw was Frank Prior in his office at 910 South Michigan in Chicago. I never will forget it. Frank was Chairman of the Board, or President then—I don't know which—of Standard of Indiana which later became AMOCO. In the middle of my spiel to him all of sudden Frank shot a stream of tobacco juice from his mouth to his cuspidor. I completely froze. I never will forget Frank's amused look at me. He said, "Haven't you seen anybody expectorate?" (laughter)

I don't want to say that when I was a kid I wasn't scared to death. I was. But it wasn't being scared to death of donors as people. It was, rather, being too self conscious, afraid that I wouldn't know what to say to them, being insecure that I wouldn't know how to make the best presentation, that I wouldn't be able to sell them on the University. That's what I was scared to death of. Not the fact that he was Frank Prior. You see what I'm saying?

It didn't take many years for me to realize that there weren't many competitors out there. People used to ask, "who do you compete with?" The one I competed most with was Howard Gotlieb at Boston University. Howard is a genius. I dearly love Howard and I used to say to everybody who had given their papers to Boston that they were in extremely good hands, that he runs a first class archive. And he does. Furthermore he's a genius. Donors forwarded my letters to Gotlieb. After about the tenth one that hit his desk, he wrote me and said "Gressley, you jerk, you know I can't get at you now!" (laughter)

●*What did you find, after talking with him and being around him, was his modus operandi? How was he different from you?* I've never quite understood that, to be honest with you. I've read letters he's written to people, as he's read mine, and I'm sure he's said the same thing. I can't understand what he possesses. You don't understand what he has until you meet him, and there's where his modus operandi is. Howard Gotlieb is just downright charming. Somehow his personality comes across that you're the most important person he's every talked to. I don't know how he does this, but he does it.

And this is another aspect of collecting: there's chemistry to it. I think that sounds horsey. I don't say this to anybody very often, but there is



something in collecting that is undefinable. You have to like it, but I think you also have to be able to get it across. I really enjoy most people I see. I really think people are a helluva lot of fun! But you have to be able to enjoy them. You adjust yourself to each person you talk to, and that is where the chemistry and the talent, if any, comes in. You have to, in the first thirty seconds of a conversation, almost assess them personality-wise.

There was a very gracious man in Old Baldy who was an heir to the Scott Paper Company. He was also, in fact, the director of First National Bank of Palm Beach, enormously wealthy. His demeanor was always very formal. Very proper and very gracious. I adopted a formal, proper manner when talking to him. You've got to adjust to people like this.

● *I'm wondering about your background. You certainly were adaptable. Yes, and I was also raised with adults. That's another thing I hadn't thought of for years. I was at church conferences when I was eight, nine, ten years old. Adults were my associates.*

● *I think maybe this was enjoyable for you Gene, just as you said. And I think that's a pretty important thing. If you're going to convince anybody that you're sincere, that you're genuine in your intentions, I think that you have to enjoy it. Sure.*

● *Has being able to enjoy it been an important part of this whole job over thirty-one years?*

Yes. Thirty-two years. And I really miss it! The thing I didn't realize when I left that job is that I would miss the people as much as I do. I'd said for years I wanted to do research in the materials I collected. I do. But I want to be free to also walk out that door and go after a collection. It's pained me the last year to see some of the collections lost that I know we could have gotten. No one's going after them.

● *Are you saying where is this headed? I'm not sure where it's headed. That's what I'm saying. I've never tried to sit down to write a history of the AHC which, incidentally, I'm going to do someday.*

● *You're a historian. You've got some historical perspective. They say that a person living the history doesn't really understand it. I think that's bunk. I think a good historian understands exactly what his contribution is. Do you feel that you have made a significant contribution? Have you felt all along that what you were doing was important? Yes. But allow me to qualify that. I told you I stood and looked out that window one night toward the Snowy Range and said: "Gressley, you've no place to go but up." About 1965 or '66 I began to realize that we could make this a major archive, quite frankly, with a lot of help. This is another thing I have not emphasized enough. No one—and I sincerely believe this—no one does anything by themselves! Over the years the Center has had a talented, dedicated staff. Esther Kelley, Eunice Spackman, Jodi Riedesel, Chuck Roundy and Jim Herrold come to mind, among others. When we got the Anaconda Collection, the number of people that helped was enormous! I found the collection. I orchestrated the effort. I found the official in Denver to contact. But Ed Herschler, Stan Hathaway, Cliff Hansen, Tom Stroock, Win Hickey, John Simons—who was the major force behind the acquisition—and many, many more were involved.*

● *Who was the official? Mike Bowlin (President of Atlantic Richfield Co., 1995). He was being shielded. He was making the decision, and I didn't find that out until a friend of his told me on a golf course. (laughter) I mean that's how I found out. All our competitors were dealing with his assistants. I told Governor Herschler: "You know, we don't want to do that." And Ed quite agreed. After I explained he said, "That makes sense." That didn't take two seconds.*

I've had a lot of support throughout Wyoming. Wyoming has supported this operation and this archive has state visibility. Can you think of an archive in another state that has this kind of state visibility? It doesn't! This does. And it's because of the smallness of the state that we were allowed to surface. This is a very important part to the growth of this archive. That we were able to get bankers, sheepmen and cattlemen interested. We had support. I could go into the Stock Growers today and get support, or the Wool Growers. This has been very important to the whole success of the operation. Again, it's meeting people. It's being able to relate, to sell. I can sit down with the cattleman and relate to him, and he senses I don't feel superior to him. And I don't. God knows, I don't feel superior to anybody. I don't feel inferior to many, either. (laughter) Go ahead.

● *You were talking about recognizing the significance of what you've done. Oh yes. I got off there, but I wanted to be sure I got that point in. Because I don't want this to sound like—which I don't really feel it is—a monologue or a Gressley egomania. This archive was developed through a*



tremendous amount of support by loads of people, and I always emphasize that.

●*I feel that now what you're saying is that Gene Gressley is actually a very humble person, that it takes all kinds... No, not humble. I'm a point man.*

●*Point man?* Yes. I pointed the direction. On Anaconda. This state would never have obtained the Anaconda Collection if I hadn't known it was there.

●*You're the tip of the spear?* Yes, I'm the tip of the spear. I'm the point man. But boy, it takes troops!

●*Well everybody knows that, Gene. What I'm getting at is that, in a way, I sort of believe in this "great man theory." Where would this archival repository be without Gene Gressley? And I'm not trying to get you to brag on yourself. No, no. I know what you're saying.*

●*Somebody came along in 1956 and said "I'm gonna do this" and, by god, they went out and did it! I think, having been in state government for twenty-odd years, it takes ...there's certain balls of fire, there's certain bright lights in the system that cause things to happen. Oh yes, I would buy all of that, Mark. I'm not trying to be that modest about it. But what I'm saying is, I had a lot of support or that bright light wouldn't have come on. It would have been extinguished.*

●*You don't think that, by hook or by crook, Gene Gressley could have gotten what he wanted to get? No. I think, by hook or by crook, if I hadn't had support Gene Gressley couldn't have gotten what he got for the University. I really believe that.*

●*Who was your biggest supporter? Duke Humphrey?* Oh, there were so many supporters. It would be impossible to name them all and dangerous to name a few, for you are always going to risk missing someone, or in this case, many. Of course, the presidents of UW. The ones that stand out were Duke Humphrey, Hugh McFadden, Jack Fey and Bill Carlson. Carlson worked awfully hard for the program, traveled with me, and was responsible for a number of collections coming to the University.

## ***"Then it dawned on me that this could be a national archive."***

Joe and Arlene Watt—their dedication and philanthropy over the decades has been a major force in the growth of the AHC. Eleanor Chatterton Kennedy, who first shared the dream of a new American Heritage Center building back in 1972 over a delightful lunch at the Denver Club. Win Hickey—without her imaginative, persistent leadership in obtaining state matching grant the AHC could not have happened. Clara Toppan gave the AHC a priceless rare book collection. It's the foremost hunting and fishing rare book collection in the U.S. She also, by the way, gave a handsome endowment to preserve the collection. Then there's the "Friends of the American Heritage Center," a group organized in 1975 to build the program and a new facility. People like C.E. Brimmer, Bob Darrow, Kim Krueger, Thyra Thomson. So many of the Friends helped the AHC grow: Cliff Hansen, Stan Hathaway, Teno Roncalio, Larry Woods, Dave True, Bill Curry, Wilson Walther, Lloyd Taggart, Bob McBride—just to name a few.

●*What about Dave Love?* Yes, Dave and Jane Love. Dave Love never quits! I mean never quits! John and Lynn Simons. Do you know John at all? One of the most decent, honorable men I know, just downright decent. Doesn't have a mean bone in his body. He couldn't believe there was so much politics in the university until he was appointed to a couple of committees. He was just shocked!

OK, what I was going to say was, about 1966 I realized for the first time that Wyoming might be able to build the most important archive between Chicago and the Pacific Coast. Up to that time we were just going to build a good archive, a good regional archive. Then it dawned on me that this could be a national archive.

●*Why?* It was growing so darn fast, and I began to realize we had the skills to do it. I began to be confident that we could go for the major collections in the country and hope to get them. The only reason I hadn't tried before was I didn't think we could get them. The last few years we were competing with the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian, on and on. One of the first ones was the Standard Oil Trust material. I didn't dream we could get that, but after we got it I began to think, "Huh, maybe I can retire," as everybody does in their life. I also thought: "Maybe you can take the next step." And this is what I did.

●*Do you think that Wyoming—being a place where a person can be a big fish in a little pond—environmentally was right, or ready, or allowed you to do what you did?* Oh sure. That's what I'm saying. And nobody ever ridiculed the fact that an archivist had done this. You might ask: "Why would they?" Well, why would they feel it was pretty important, either?

●*You knew when you got into this, that people don't generally feel themselves or even their fathers to be all that historic, perhaps. They think history and historical significance goes back two hundred*

years to colonial America. You realized that when you were getting into this, didn't you? That you were up against an attitude? Oh yes, but over the years that attitude's also changed. Quite bluntly, I don't have to introduce myself anymore. I do, but people know the name. And this is because of thirty-two years of letter writing and door-to-door contacts. Personal contacts are crucial!

●What has been your most embarrassing moment in collecting, do you think? Well that incident up in Montana was one of them. My most embarrassing moment in collecting ...I think it was ...well, I don't know the most embarrassing moment.

●Just an example. There was a judge in Chicago whose papers I was after. I realized after I wrote to him describing his career that I had described the wrong career! That left me kinda gasping! (laughter) It did him, too. He said: "I don't know Gressley, I hope you find the guy you're after." (laughter)

●Somebody told me one time that you used to go through the New York Times obituaries. Not only the New York Times but the Washington Post, L.A. Times.

●How did you do that? I just went through them and looked at the ones I thought were interesting or that fit into the areas we were collecting.

●Somebody told me one time that you actually got the name of a dog. The person turned out to be a dog. Is that correct? I don't remember, it could have been. But you know, what I did more than once is write to somebody who was already dead. I remember one because a woman wrote back. I should have kept that envelope. I was so embarrassed I threw it in the wastebasket immediately. She wrote in green ink on the back of it: "Shame, shame, shame!" And she made an exclamation mark! Anyhow, I shall never forget that. I was so embarrassed because he'd been dead five years and I had written to him for his papers.

●Did you feel compelled to write another letter of explanation? I felt compelled to apologize. This is another thing I've always done. You talk about technique. This is one thing I always do. Always. When somebody turns us down I write and thank them for considering us. Because at the next cocktail party they will say: "You know, I didn't give John's papers to Wyoming, but maybe I should have. They were gracious and wrote and thanked me for even thinking of them. But it was nice to get a letter of appreciation." I've always done that. It's almost like an insurance salesman, I suppose. You always want to leave these people as friends. Now this whole ethos I'm sketching for you, of Gressley's personality and approach, is something the University would never let pass. (laughter) Well, let's mention the major mistake I made. The major mistake I made in the development of my career was not getting the University faculty to back this program.

●Do you think, speaking of your critics, that there is a feeling on their part that your success, in a way, is a reflection of their failure? Yes. And I think that's true with everybody. It's not only in the archival world. Anyplace. Business. Everywhere else. I know faculty members around here and I'm not going to name them—you know them, too—that have never done anything in their life. And I think really they feel very guilty at age fifty. I used to tell my kids this. I said, "I don't want to wake up at fifty and wonder what I've done with my life. I want to wake up at fifty and say: "It's been a good race." If I drop over dead tomorrow I gave it my all. But as far as I'm concerned it's sure as hell not ended, either. Because the minute you say that, it is ended.

●Why didn't you take the time to go out and cultivate the necessary... OK, I will tell you the assumption that I made which I think was a major mistake. I thought it was hopeless. I remember talking to Jim Ranz—I don't remember the date but '62-'63, somewhere in that period—and complaining that we were gathering a lot of material nobody was using. He said: "Gene that will change. You just get the material." And that's another belief you have to have, that eventually this material will be used. It may not be used this century even, but it will be used the next century. He was smarter than I was in that. He said: "Don't worry about the fact that they don't want to use it. It will get used." We've got a mining collection second to none.

For years we were the "farm club," as I used to call it, of the University of Illinois. There's a mining historian there by the name of Clark Spence. He sent out all his graduate students to do their dissertations in our collections. We have yet to get a twentieth century economic historian in the (UW) History Department. Now that is crazy! When we've got the archival resources we've got? That doesn't make any sense.





● I don't know whether you want to talk about this or not but the two biggest criticisms that I've read about in the paper, and that I've heard from other people, are: number one, Gressley collects, collects, collects and never sorts and catalogues or doesn't do it adequately; and the other is that Gressley is more interested in obtaining tax breaks for individuals than he is in... I can answer those. Doesn't even bother me. I have heard them so much. First of all, Gressley does collect and collect, but as far as organizing is concerned and making it available, you can have the finest inventories—even computerization of collections—and you won't get people interested in doing research in them unless they're interested in doing research. It's that simple. The other thing about the processing side: it's very simple to solve that problem. You give Gressley enough people and he'll get those things catalogued. Our acquisitions always outran our processing support. It takes a lot fewer people to get collections than it does to process them. And it's very simple to do it.

● Why, if you knew that, didn't you try to get that support? I tried. Our staff grew to twenty people, but they would never give us professional archivists. And twenty people is not enough to catalogue that collection

and keep up. You see, we did make inventories for about 9500 out of 13,000 collections. That's a lot. But we didn't do them as well as we should have done them. We didn't keep up with the inflow because we didn't have the staff. But I kept trying to increase the number of staff. You ought to see the letters to Elliot Hayes, Jim Ranz, Duke and other administrators for thirty years, pleading for staff. We did get increases. After all, when I arrived here in 1956 there was one person beside myself.

● You've got a great structure of support out there inside the state and without. Why couldn't you have tapped into that structure of support saying, "Look, I love getting this stuff but I gotta have some help to sort and catalog?" I was always interested in the hunt more than I was in processing, in all justice. I had to be. We had an empty archive! And what interests me is, it's like any fight: how little people change! I mean, they're with you or they're against you, and from year to year they're with you or they're against you. The same people that were with me ten years ago are still with me. The same people that were my enemies ten years ago are still my enemies. It's amazing how codified, polarized this gets. It really is amazing.

● What about the tax issue? The tax issue is a phony one. First of all, I have never given a formal appraisal in my life! Now, everybody says, "Oh nonsense!" What I have done is say: "In my opinion the following collection should be valued at \_\_\_\_." That is an opinion. I'm not endangering the University and I'm not endangering myself. If I were doing something illegal I would have been in jail. That's why I say the tax thing is purely a red herring.

● They'd be down your throat. They'd be down my throat. I have had twelve or thirteen IRS contests out of 12,000, 13,000 collections. And they weren't after me or the University. You don't put yourself or your university in a position where you can get attacked.

● Is what hurts the fact that the university that you're working for, and have worked 32 years so hard for, has sort of rejected its own baby? You know, you aren't going to believe this Mark. What really hurts is that I can't go ahead and do it. It isn't the fact that they're rejecting that archive, because they can't do away with that archive. That's there. And this too will pass, and in ten or fifteen years that archive will still be sitting there. It's the fact that they're losing the opportunity of increasing the wealth of that archive for this university and Wyoming. That's what hurts. And my own enjoyment of collecting. I love collecting. I've been offered collections that no one here accepts. So we are losing, week after week, material that we should have, that I've worked on hard to get to come here. Now, some of the donors have died, and it's in their wills, or whatever. What I don't expect you to believe, Mark, which is really true, is that I don't get very emotional about that archive being my personal baby. What I get emotional about is not being allowed to be in the process, not to be able to add to it. That's what hacks me off! Because we're missing opportunity after opportunity. And that's the nature of the hunter, the collector. Wyoming is simply losing out!

● Do you think that you will be justified in the end? Oh, sure. You see, this is another reason I'm not down. Because—and this is going to sound like an egotist—basically I know I'm right. I am so confident that I'm right. I know what I've done and haven't done! Sure, I've done some things that embarrass me. It isn't any more than the faculty, or the president or anybody else has done. We all have things in our past we'd just as soon forget. (laughter) Everybody does. If you haven't then there's

something wrong. You aren't human.

●Not me. Yes. (laughter) Well, I've talked an awful lot. If you want more you can get more from me. Wait till you digest all this. (laughter)

●You've been really open on this, and I can promise you I'm not going to use anything here to discredit you. Oh, I know. But I'm not so much interested in you discrediting me. I don't worry much about that. I'd just as soon you wouldn't tell some of it.

●I suppose that as you went out and collected, all sorts of things were revealed unto you that you never planned. You might have thought, "Oh my god! I never realized all of this was out here!" Well, one of the things that I realize after talking to people like Larry Birleff, you, and a few others is that there's some issues in this state that are really important. And I'd love to get at the heart of them. Bobbi Birleff's interested in doing something on the "Black 14." Now that was a significant event in the history of Wyoming, whether or not it's just related to sports. But there's so much out there. I think this crisis with you and the University has been pretty well-publicized. I'd like to get into that more. But the more I get into it, the more responsibility I have to assume. The "Black 14" I think you could investigate now. But this is a little raw because we're right in it. Maybe ten years from now or five years from now you could take ten issues in contemporary Wyoming history or ten turning points in Wyoming history and do those. I'm not saying this is one of them. For instance, there's been a tremendous metamorphosis in the livestock industry since I arrived in this state. Tremendous! I mean that way of life has changed. You could do something on that. The role of the Stock Growers, frankly, is going down and has gone down. Because other interests are coming in and competing. But the whole transformation of that industry is worth getting out to the public. The water situation in this state is a very dynamic one that needs to be investigated.

●That's another thing that you've probably come across that could be written on from now to eternity, and you've got all the raw material over there. It's amazing. I want to ask you this question. You're a historian. A hundred years from now, what's this collection going to be like and what's it going to be worth? Not in terms of money, necessarily, although I'd be interested in that. But, say Gene Gressley could come back here one hundred years from now. God grants him this favor and says: "Gene, here you are, it's now the year..." That's awfully hard to say. I just think it'll be one of the priceless collections in America. Because we have collected things that nobody else will have. And you never know what's worthwhile. It's the old story of one man's dessert is another man's poison. My perfect example of this is—this happened in just the last two years—we acquired an enormous collection of mine machinery blueprints.

●The Anaconda Collection? No, this was before that. Blueprints of nineteenth and twentieth century mining machinery from the Gould Company in California. It was sent to me almost under protest. I didn't say I didn't want it, but what are we going to do with this ton of material? It was full of junk, rat filings, etc. Geez, I looked at that and have to admit I was not very excited about it. Several years later the wife of a mining engineer on our faculty, Ruth Gardner, was writing all over this country to find out where the Gould records were and discovered that they were sitting over here in our archives. I got a big bang out of that.

There was a professor giving a talk on Clementine Churchill. Margaret Ankeny. I don't know if you've ever heard of her or not. Professor here at the College of Education. I wrote: "Dear Margaret, up in the archives in the safe there's three hundred letters of Clementine Churchill. I doubt that they'll give them to you to show." "But" I said, "I bet they'll Xerox off a few copies of them." Here is Clementine Churchill sitting in Laramie, Wyoming. Why? Because Lewis Einstein, whose collection we have, was a great friend of Clementine's and they wrote back and forth. What's this collection going to be worth one hundred years from now? I have no idea. I think it's worth—just being conservative—thirty or forty million today. What it will be worth then I don't know.

●That much? Oh yes, easily. Well, the Anaconda Collection's ten (million). Its appraised at ten. But not by me!

●I've got to get this on tape and then we'll go. There's a conflict in my mind about this. You know as well as I do that a lot of people you collect from, or a lot of people out there in the world—let's put it that way—don't understand the value of the history we have. Sure.

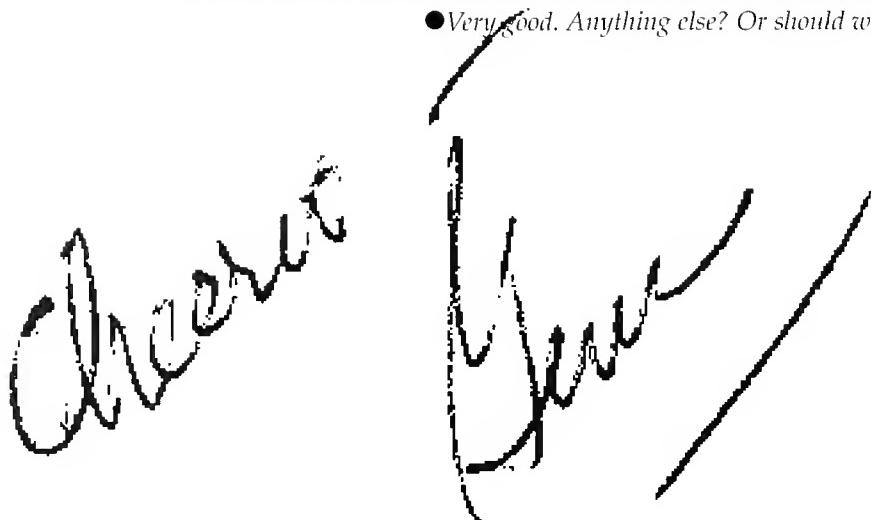
**"...we have collected things that nobody else will have. And you never know what's worthwhile. It's the old story of one man's dessert is another man's poison."**



● All right, so one hundred years from now you've got all this stuff. Gressley's probably telling himself: "Someday this is going to be really valuable." Is that true? Will it really be valuable to anybody? And for what reason? Well, of course, you don't know what kind of society or intellectual interests you're going to have one hundred years from now. Maybe we won't have a society that's interested in the past at all. If that's true, then of course this collection is worthless. But if we do have a society that is interested, yes, it's going to be very valuable.

● As a research tool? As a research tool. Because we have done something very few archives in the United States have done. We have collected the twentieth century.

● Very good. Anything else? Or should we get out of here? Why don't we get out?



MARK JUNGE HAS BEEN EDITOR OF *Wyoming Annals* SINCE 1992. HE HAS WORKED FOR ONE STATE AGENCY OR ANOTHER EVER SINCE HE AND HIS WIFE, ARDATH, ARRIVED IN WYOMING IN 1967 WITH THEIR SON, ANDY. ANOTHER SON, DAN, WAS BORN IN SHERIDAN IN 1969. THIS ISSUE OF *Annals* IS HIS LAST BECAUSE HE WILL BE RETIRING FROM STATE GOVERNMENT THIS FALL.

WHILE IN THE EMPLOY OF STATE GOVERNMENT JUNGE HAS AUTHORED THREE BOOKS: *Wyoming: A Guide to Historic Sites* (BASIN, WYOMING: BIG HORN BOOK CO., 1976); *J.E. Stimson: Photographer of the West* (LINCOLN: UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA PRESS, 1985); AND *Wyoming: A Pictorial History* (NORFOLK, VIRGINIA: DONNING CO., 1989). CURRENTLY HE IS COMPLETING A *Wyoming Album*, A BOOK FEATURING PHOTOGRAPHS AND INTERVIEWS OF THE STATE'S CITIZENS.

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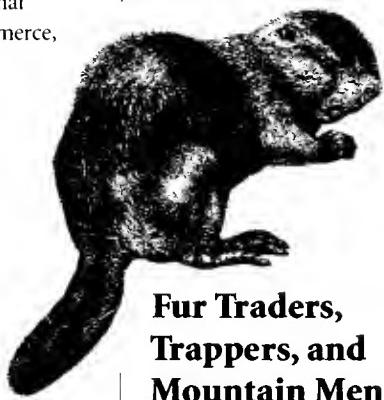
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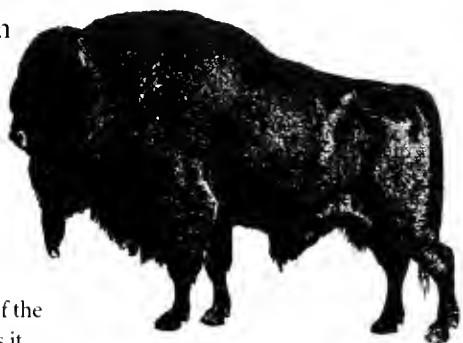
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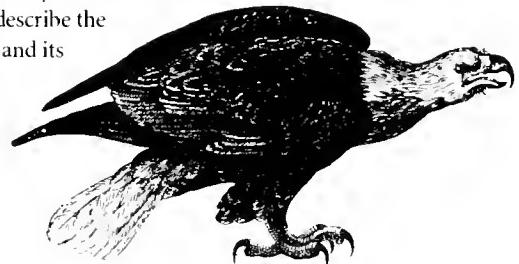


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# COWS ALL OVER



*by Lee H. Whittlesey*  
**THE HISTORIC SETTING**  
**BRUCELLOSIS TO YELLOW**

the

Jerry Salen

**T**he bison of Yellowstone National Park today number approximately 4200 animals.<sup>1</sup> They are a nationally-recognized resource in an international biosphere area that depend upon the wellness and wholeness of the entire Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) for their health.<sup>2</sup> In recent years, as they learned to use groomed snowmobile roads for walking routes out of the park in winter, more and more bison have migrated from Yellowstone via the west entrance. At the north entrance some bison have left, and still routinely leave, Yellowstone in winter by following the often snowless Yellowstone River valley, a migration that has probably occurred in some fashion for hundreds if not thousands of years.<sup>3</sup>

Because some Yellowstone bison carry brucellosis, a disease which can cause the calves of domestic cattle to abort, Montana stockmen are immediately concerned whenever bison leave Yellowstone Park.<sup>4</sup> The state of Montana regulates the migration by shooting stray animals. This causes controversy when animal rights groups and other interested persons complain to the media or physically disrupt the shootings. Animal rights people and others concerned about bison ask:

*Why should a magnificent wild and free animal that is an important part of America's historical landscape be killed simply to protect domestic cattle herds of a special-interest industry that may have given the disease to the bison in the first place?*

On the other hand, others ask: *If only individual bison are involved, why not protect cattle from brucellosis?* At times the controversy has become heated and angry, and physical confrontations have occurred.<sup>5</sup>

Yellowstone bison are very much in the public eye. And for that reason the origins of their brucellosis are of great interest to park managers, area residents, Wyomingites, Montanans and an entire nation concerned with protecting the integrity of the world's first national park.

The importance of history in scientific investigations cannot be overemphasized. All too often scientists do not utilize historians to help them form conclusions. If they believe their projects are the first such ever done, the history of the subject can be ignored. Conversely, when writing about a scientific subject, historians must utilize the expertise of scientists in order to thoroughly understand their subjects. Reciprocity is desirable in a world that increasingly requires cross-disciplinary thinking.

Knowing the historic origins of brucellosis in Yellowstone bison has ramifications for park managers and everyone interested in protecting Yellowstone. Cattlemen may be more sympathetic to the problems of park managers and may not be so quick to yell "Foul!" when bison leave the park if they know that cattle may have initiated the problem. On the other hand, park managers may be more likely to manage bison herds by vaccinating and treating them for the disease if they

know that the disease was introduced by man rather than having occurred naturally. National Park Service management practice allows for some manipulation of ecosystems to compensate for problems caused by man. Finally, an aware public may become more sympathetic to the complexity of the Yellowstone bison situation and thus give stronger support to the National Park Service in its drive to preserve the nation's only wild buffalo herd surviving from ancient times.

No one knows positively how brucellosis got into the Yellowstone bison herd. It may have occurred naturally or it may have been introduced at some time through unknown processes. Whether or not the disease is native is a matter for scientists to debate and re-

1. While it is not technically correct to call bison "buffalo" it is accepted, the same as it is acceptable to call Native Americans "Indians." A major reference work by F.G. Roe is entitled *The North American Buffalo* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970).

2. In turn, it is necessary for the GYE to be healthy in order for park bison to make their biological contributions to its continued well being, a "Catch-22" situation. The GYE is an undefined area that includes the 3,472 square miles of Yellowstone National Park and approximately 8,500 square miles of surrounding national forests in one of the nation's largest, relatively intact wilderness ecosystems. For discussions on the GYE boundaries see Tim W. Clark and Steven C. Minta, *Greater Yellowstone's Future: Prospects for Ecosystem Science, Management, and Policy* (Moose, Wyoming: Homestead Publishing, 1994), or the more conservative John A. Baden and Donald Leal, eds., *The Yellowstone Primer: Land and Resource Management in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem* (San Francisco: Pacific Research Institute for Public Policy, 1994).

3. That bison have occupied Yellowstone Park since at least the last ice age is apparent from archaeological and paleontological studies. See Mary Meagher, *The Bison of Yellowstone National Park* (Washington: National Park Service, 1973), pp.13-25,70-71. See E. Hadley, "Late Holocene Mammalian Fauna of Lamar Cave..." M.S. thesis, Northern Arizona University, 1990; and Meagher, "Winter Recreation-Induced Changes in Bison Numbers and Distribution in Yellowstone National Park", unpublished manuscript, March, 1993, YNP Library, Mammoth.

That bison occupied the Park from 1830 to 1881 is definite according to recent records. See Paul Schullery and Lee Whittlesey, "The Documentary Record of Wolves and Related Wildlife Species in the Yellowstone National Park Area Prior to 1882", in *Wolves for Yellowstone?: A Report to the United States Congress*, vol. IV (Yellowstone: YNP Research Division, 1992), passim and p.1-153.

4. Also called undulant fever or Bang's disease when it occurs in humans. Sophisticated dairy methods now make transmission to humans relatively rare. There were about ninety human cases in the United States in 1993 through direct contact. Dr. Mary Meagher, *Speech to Members of Division of Interpretation at Mammoth Hot Springs, YCC Camp, 4 June 1994*, Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming.

5. The best summary and discussion of the history and the law of this controversy are in Robert B. Keiter and Peter H. Froelicher, "Bison, Brucellosis, and Law in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem," (*University of Wyoming Land and Water Law Review*, 28, no.1 (1993):1-75.

## FOR THE TRANSMISSION OF BISON BY DOMESTIC CATTLE

P l a c e

solve. But there may be an historical explanation. Many experts are beginning to lean toward the theory that the disease was introduced. One possibility is the intermingling of park bison with infected domestic cattle. Domestic cattle can transmit brucellosis to bison just as the reverse can occur by direct contact of cattle with aborted bison calves or afterbirth, cattle nursing on bison milk or feeding on contaminated pasture, or by cattle licking the reproductive organs of an infected bison. It is even possible that elk just south of Yellowstone in Jackson Hole contracted brucellosis from cattle.<sup>6</sup> Even if the disease acts slightly differently in bison than it does in cattle, even if abortions in bison may be shown to be rare in the wild, the possibility exists that contact occurred sometime, someplace on the Yellowstone Plateau and that the disease was thus transmitted from domestic cattle to Yellowstone bison.<sup>7</sup>

For a long time there was disagreement among authorities concerning whether or not Yellowstone bison, and bison in general, could have contracted brucellosis from domestic cattle. But now several authorities that were formerly in disagreement are on the same side. Dr. Mark Johnson, Park wildlife research veterinarian, considers the link between cattle and Yellowstone brucellosis "likely if not probable."<sup>8</sup> Dr. Donald Ferlicka, formerly of the Montana Department of Livestock, although believing that Yellowstone bison were infected by park importation of outside buffalo around 1902, also believes that Great Plains bison were infected by domestic cattle.<sup>9</sup> In recent months Drs. Mary Meagher and Margaret Meyer, nationally known experts on Yellowstone bison, have adopted the domestic cattle theory after fierce debate with other biologists. For awhile Meagher considered the connection

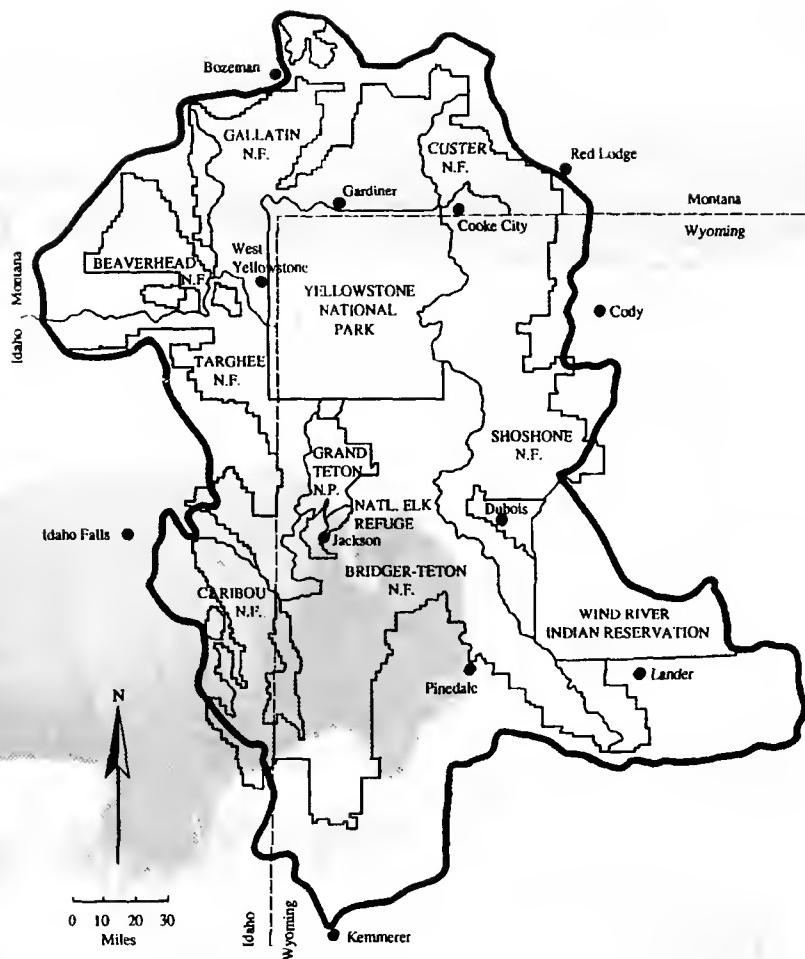
between domestic cattle and brucellosis in Yellowstone to have been unlikely because of park geography, bison behavior and organism behavior, but she has changed her mind.<sup>10</sup>

Although brucellosis was not reported in Yellowstone

6.

Margaret E. Meyer, "Brucella Abortus in the Yellowstone National Park Bison Herd", unpublished report to Department of Interior, 18 March 1992, p.l., YNP Library; author's interview with Dr. Mark Johnson, Wildlife Veterinarian, YNP, Wyoming, 18 February 1992.

7. Mary Meagher and Margaret E. Meyer, "On the Origin of Brucellosis in Bison of Yellowstone National Park: A Review", unpublished manuscript, YNP, Wyoming, n.d. [1994], p.l. The final version of this article is published under the same title in *Conservation Biology* 8:645-653, September, 1994.



*Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, from Greater Yellowstone's Future: Prospects for Ecosystem Science, Management, and Policy (Moose, Wyoming: Homestead Publishing Company, 1994), p.15. Photo by Mark Junge: Bison crossing Swan Lake Flats, Yellowstone National Park, 1994.*

National Park until 1917, some bison biologists believe the disease could have been present in the Park herd prior to that date.<sup>11</sup> Dr. Don Davis of Texas A & M University believes that the organism could have been latent or unknown for many years before 1917. Davis avers that prior to the American brucellosis eradication programs of the 1930s, at

least forty per cent of all American domestic cattle had brucellosis, indicating that the chances of GYE cattle having had the disease in early days were high.<sup>12</sup> Dr. Donald Ferlicka notes that

8. Johnson interview, 18 February 1992.

9. Dr. Donald Ferlicka, State Veterinarian, Montana Department of Livestock, Helena, Montana, letter to author, 26 May 1992.

10. Meagher and Meyer, "On the origin...", unpublished draft [1994], p.18; Scott McHillion, "Butting Heads Over Brucellosis", *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*, 28 April 1992, p.l. When I finished this article in August, 1992 Dr. Meagher told me that she disagreed vehemently with the idea that Yellowstone bison could have contracted brucellosis from domestic cattle and that I was completely on the wrong track. So I held the article for a year. But Dr. Meagher's new paper, produced in the interim and cited above, indicates that she has changed her mind and has upgraded cattle contacts to first place in the list of possibilities for transmission of brucellosis. However, she provides little documentation on park conditions that accommodated transmission of the disease. That is the purpose of this article.

11. J.R. Mohler, as cited in Margaret Meyer, "Brucella Abortus...", p.19.

12. Author's telephone conversation with Dr. Don Davis, Texas A & M University, 11 May 1992.

the disease "could well have and probably did go 'unnoticed' for quite some time in Yellowstone."<sup>13</sup>

A key scientist agrees. Dr. Winthrop C. Ray is a brucellosis epidemiologist in Charlottesville, Virginia, and the researcher who, according to his peers, has done the most in tracing the history and origins of the disease. Dr. Ray says brucellosis was imported by domestic cattle from Europe into the Mississippi Valley about the time of the Civil War. He does not think the disease spread west before 1900 although he emphasizes that no one is sure of this. Dakota veterinarians mentioned it during the period 1903-1912 and, most significant for Yellowstone, bulletins and reports from Montana Experiment Stations mentioned it about 1903.<sup>14</sup>

**W**hile it cannot be proven by science or history that transmission of brucellosis to Yellowstone bison occurred through contact with cattle, the historic environment for that possibility can be documented. It is possible and even likely that there were individuals or small groups of Yellowstone bison which wandered west or north of the park to become infected by cattle and which then returned to transmit the disease to other Yellowstone bison.<sup>15</sup> The possibility of that very thing occurring inside the park is even greater, especially considering the period of time in which park bison were not observed by humans.<sup>16</sup>

The history of domestic cattle in the Yellowstone country is fragmentary.<sup>17</sup>

13. Letter to author from Dr. Donald Ferlicka, State Veterinarian, Montana Department of Livestock, Helena, Montana, 26 May 1992. Ferlicka's claim that the disease was not identified in the U.S. until 1897 has apparently been modified by Dr. Winthrop Ray's research.

14. Author's telephone conversation with Dr. Winthrop C. Ray, Charlottesville, Virginia, March, 1994. The results of Dr. Ray's research will soon be published. His comments square with, and expand upon, those of Keiter and Froelicher, "Bison, Brucellosis, and Law," footnote #125, p.21.

15. The chances of bison having wandered east or south are much less likely because the Absaroka Mountains on the east and Big Game Ridge on the south provided natural barriers. Also, there were far fewer ranches in those areas until later. A slightly greater chance of bison-cattle contacts existed to the southwest where park bison could conceivably have ranged onto the Idaho ranches of Mormon settlers, but even there the distances are greater than to ranches north or west of the Park.

16. A recent bison history for Yellowstone is Schullery and Whittlesey, "Documentary Record," see pp. 51,71,90,124,171, 176,211-212,250.

There were cattle in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem as early as 1869. Thus, if domestic cattle were responsible for brucellosis transmission, conditions for it were in place from earliest days. The Bottler brothers—Frederick, Phillip, and Henry—settled in Paradise Valley, Montana, in 1868. They set up a hay, cattle and dairy ranch almost immediately. In September, 1869, David Folsom's party saw cattle there. According to Folsom a dozen head of cattle had free access to a stack of wheat on the premises. The Earl of Dunraven, a hunter who passed through in 1874, noted that the Bottler dairy was in operation when he visited the place. The following year General W.E. Strong, on his way to the Park, also recorded seeing cattle on the Bottler ranch.<sup>18</sup> These were probably the first cattle in Paradise Valley but others would quickly follow.

There are two possible scenarios for the spread of brucellosis involving cattle: 1) infected, free-ranging

17. See Kenneth N. and Sally Owens, "Buffalo and Bacteria," *Montana Magazine of Western History* 37 (Spring, 1987):65-67, who use the Yellowstone bison situation as a springboard for discussion of diseases in bison and cattle in nineteenth century America. However, they do not document specific instances in which these two animals could have encountered each other in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

18. William H. Jackson, *The Pioneer Photographer* (New York: World Book Company, 1929), p.106. A biography of Frederick Bottler appears in *Progressive Men of the State of Montana* (Chicago: A.W. Bowen and Company, n.d.), p.542. See also W.H. Jackson, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Photographs of the United States Geological Survey of the Territories for the Years 1869 to 1875, Inclusive.* (Washington: GPO, 1875), 1871 series, photo caption #203, p.24. The Folsom account is in Aubrey L. Haines, ed., *Valley of the Upper Yellowstone* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), p.15. The Earl of Dunraven's account is in his *The Great Divide...* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), p.347. General Strong's account is in Richard A. Bartlett, ed., *A Trip to the Yellowstone National Park in July, August, and September, 1875* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), p.33. He says: "We saw in the fields adjoining the house a large number of horses and cattle, many of them fine animals."



*Buffalo Ranch, Lamar Valley, ca. 1928 and 1929, Sam Woodring, photographer. All three photos: Yellowstone National Park Museum Collection.*

cattle could have contacted wild bison, or 2) captured bison placed with infected cattle could have returned to the wild taking the disease with them to other bison. The Bottler brothers captured bison and commingled them with their cattle herds by 1875. Captain William E. Ludlow and a military party which included scientist George Bird Grinnell arrived at Bottler's in August of that year, and both men stated that bison were mingled with Bottler cattle. Ludlow noted: "Bottler's Ranch was reached at 5 PM, and very good meals and lodging obtained. We observed a small herd of cattle near by, with which three young buffalo were apparently domesticated."<sup>19</sup> Grinnell corroborated Ludlow: "Near Bottler's we saw young buffalo feeding with the cattle."<sup>20</sup> But the most dramatic proof of bison commingling with cattle at Bottler Ranch is in photographer John Fouch's 1876-78 catalogue. Photo number forty-four is captioned, "Half Breed Buffalo at Bottler's Ranch, Montana Territory," indicating that actual breeding between bison and domestic cattle

had occurred in the late 1870s. This was definitely close contact, close enough to spread brucellosis if the disease was present in the cattle.<sup>21</sup>

Another cattle ranch in Yellowstone country was that of F.D. Pease. In November, 1870 Pease was appointed Indian agent at Crow Agency near Livingston, Montana. He found cattle already a part of the scene. Arriving at

19. William Ludlow, *Report of a Reconnaissance from Carroll, Montana Territory, on the Upper Missouri to the Yellowstone National Park and Return, Made in the Summer of 1875* by William Ludlow, (Washington: GPO, 1876), p.31. While science has not definitively answered the question of whether or not brucellosis can be transmitted from wildlife to cattle in the wild, it is interesting to note that the only confirmed case of brucellosis transmission from bison to cattle outside of a rigidly controlled setting occurred on a ranch where domestic bison were being raised with cattle. Keiter and Froelicher, "Bison, Brucellosis, and Law," footnote #179, p.28.

20. Grinnell in John F. Reiger, ed., *The Passing of the Great West: Selected Papers of George Bird Grinnell* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), p.117.

21. James S. Brust, "John H. Fouch, First Post Photographer at Fort Keogh," *Montana Magazine of Western History* 44 (Spring, 1994):10. No copies of this photo are known to be extant.



WYOMING STATE MUSEUM

*Bottler's Ranch (Montana), 1871.* Wm. H. Jackson. Inset: *William Ludlow (1843-1901)*, n.d.

the primitive agency on the north end of what was to become the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, Pease found nine head of oxen, one cow, one horse, and one pair of mules.<sup>22</sup> Sometime shortly after that, Pease appears either to have greatly increased the stock at the agency or to have started his own ranch at the north end of Paradise Valley. Dr. A.C. Peale stopped at the ranch in 1872 with some of the Hayden survey party to Yellowstone Park and saw buffalo commingled with Pease's cattle. Peale noted on September 30, after traveling north from Bottler's: "We are near Pease's ranch not far from the [Yellowstone] river...There are 5 elk, a moose and some buffalo there also."<sup>23</sup> A couple of days later Peale stated: "I stopped at the ranche [sic ...Pease's] this

morning...They have five young elk, a young moose and 4 buffalo calves at the ranche [sic]. We saw the elk and the moose there and the buffalo on the road. The latter are ugly and are allowed to run with the cows."<sup>24</sup> This indicates some freedom of movement by the bison in and out of the cattle ranch and introduces us to the possibility that brucellosis, if it existed in Pease's cattle, could have been transmitted to the bison which, in their fundamentally nomadic character, could have carried the disease back to the wild.<sup>25</sup>

William H. Jackson, the Hayden Survey photographer, documented bison with cattle at the Pease Ranch, noting: "large droves of cattle are herded here." He took photographs of four young buffalo calves at the ranch, noting that the bison had been captured in Yellowstone

22. Merrill G. Burlingame, *The Montana Frontier* (Bozeman: Big Sky Books, 1980), pp.182-183.

23. A.C. Peale, 1872 Diary, typescript at University of Wyoming, July 21 October 24, 1872, p.53.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

25. Dr. Mary Meagher, *Speech to Members...,* 4 June 1994, YNP.

Souvenir Program  
for the  
Centennial Birthday Party  
of the  
Wyoming State Museum

Celebrating 100 Years of History  
on February 16, 1995



SOUVENIR PROGRAM  
FOR THE  
CENTENNIAL BIRTHDAY PARTY OF THE  
WYOMING STATE MUSEUM



John A. Campbell's Civil War uniform and saber



## Statehood

The First Wyoming State Legislature continued the Territorial library and cabinet. The Territorial Cabinet was moved from the Cheyenne Opera House to the newly completed Capitol Building in 1888. Representing the celebration of Wyoming's entrance into the Union as the 44th State on July 10, 1890 is the Statehood Flag, a gift from Wyoming women.

## Territorial Era ≈ 1871 - 1888

1871 - The Territorial Legislature established a Territorial library and cabinet (museum), providing for the care and custody of books, maps, papers, objects, engravings, paintings, natural history specimens and other things relevant to the history of the Territory. "Cabinet" is an early term for a personal collection or museum; many nineteenth century collectors had "cabinets of curiosities," the source for many early museums in Europe and America.

1882 - The Territorial Cabinet (Territorial Museum) was moved into the newly built Cheyenne Opera House. It is not known where the collections were housed before this date. Reflecting this era are objects related to John A. Campbell, first Territorial Governor of Wyoming who served from 1869 - 1875.



Basket, Frank L. Lusk Collection



State Museum in the Capitol Building, 1922, J.E. Stimson photograph

## Capitol Building Era ≈ 1888 - 1937

In 1895, the Wyoming Historical Society was created and became the repository of the Territorial and State cabinet (museum) collections. This enactment, created by the 3rd State Legislature and signed into law by Governor William A. Richards on February 16, 1895 gave separate recognition to the historical collections and the library collections. Much of the information about the early exhibitions is learned from J.E. Stimson's photographs of the museum on the third floor of the Capitol Building.



## Governor's Art Award

Governor Jim Geringer presented the Wyoming State Museum with a Wyoming Arts Councils' "Governor's Arts Award," January 13, 1995.



"Packing Up," ca. 1924, Elsa Spear Edwards Byron,  
Historical Photographic Collection

## MISSION STATEMENT

*The purpose of the Wyoming State Museum is to collect, preserve, interpret and exhibit the historical and cultural material of the state in an educational manner for the benefit of Wyoming citizens and its visitors.*

State Museum in the Supreme Court Building, 1941



## Supreme Court Era ≈ 1937 – 1953

With the completion of the Supreme Court building in 1937, the State Museum was moved to its basement level.

Some of the major donations which came in during this period include the Wyoming Stock Grower's Association Collection through Russell Thorp, the Emma Jane and Gertrude

Wyoming Dobbins Collection, a collection of original photographs of Wyoming by W.H. Jackson and a collection of hand-tinted photographs by Elsa Spear Edwards (later Byron).



Crystal Falls, Yellowstone, ca. 1895, W.H. Jackson, Historical Photographic Collection

Meanea Saddles, Russell Tharp Collection



# Barrett Building Era ≈ 1953 – Present

Doorway to old District Court, Cheyenne

In 1953 the Wyoming State Museum was moved to its current home in the Barrett State Office Building. Each decade since has seen outstanding collections come to the museum and the collections now number more than a million artifacts, art works, historical photographs and historical documents. Some of this vast collection is on exhibit at the state historic sites or on loan to other Wyoming museums, but much goes unseen because of the lack of adequate exhibition space.



L.A. Limited, Crossing Wyoming, 1906,  
J.E. Stimson, Historical Photographic  
Collection



Barrett Building, ca. 1953

The 1950s saw the acquisition of the J.E. Stimson collection, a photographic treasure of more than 8,000 Wyoming scenes from the late 1800s to 1942.

The 1960s saw the creation of the State Art Gallery under the sponsorship of First Lady Roberta Hathaway in 1969. The collection, with the continuing support of the State Museum Volunteers, now numbers 2,000 plus works. Since

its founding, the State Art Gallery has provided an important venue for contemporary Wyoming artists.

"Wild Horses," ca. 1910, M.D. (Dorothy) Dolph, Art Collection



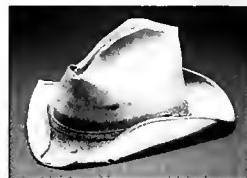
The 1970s saw the donation of the Shangreaux Family Collection of Native American materials.

In 1973 the Wyoming State Museum became the first museum in the state to receive national accreditation from the American Association of Museums.



Pipe and Pipe Bag, John and Lillie Shangreaux Collection

Governor Mike Sullivan donated his campaign hat in 1994. It is a good reminder that history is happening today and that the museum needs to be collecting for Wyoming's next 100 years of history. We look forward to your help.



Mike Sullivan's Campaign Hat

Wyoming's People Gallery, Wyoming State Museum, 1995



Funding for this souvenir publication provided by the Wyoming State Historical Society and the State Museum Volunteers, Inc.



Historical Research Collection material

Park near the head of Lamar River and that they adapted easily to the cattle. He stated: "Turned in with the cows of the cattle-herd, they very readily took up with the new regime."<sup>26</sup>

A third cattle herd in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem was located east of Point of Rocks, Montana, just north of the Park on a property owned by the Black family. This herd, too, had bison in it. Traveler H.B. Leckler passed the ranch in 1881 and observed it from the road west of the Yellowstone River. "On our right, across the river, a large herd of cattle were [sic] grazing, with a buffalo in their midst. He had probably been caught when young and put among the cattle."<sup>27</sup>

A fourth cattle ranch was located on Trail Creek southeast of Bozeman, along the hitherto usual tourist route to Yellowstone Park. The *Bozeman Avant Courier* noted in 1876 that Mr. James A. Farrell had a ranch there with "plenty of stock roaming hill and valley the year round."<sup>28</sup> His cattle, apparently free-ranging, no doubt had opportunities for contact with bison.

At a fifth ranch, located in Paradise Valley and owned by Andrew Dailey, bison were contained in pens and possibly intermingled with cattle as early as 1879. A recently discovered photo by Montana photographer John Fouch shows three buffalo in a pen at Dailey's. In Fouch's 1876-78 photograph catalogue the entry is described as "Group of three buffalo at Dailey's Ranch, Montana Territory."<sup>29</sup>

Thus, at an early date on at least these five ranches cattle were exposed to bison from Paradise Valley and possibly Yellowstone National Park because bison are nomadic animals that roam great distances. The opportunity existed

26. Clarence S. Jackson, *Picture Maker of the Old West* (New York and London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), p.118. William H. Jackson, *Descriptive Catalogue...*, 1875, 1872 series, photo caption #469, p.44; caption numbers 504-507, p.46. Jackson placed Pease's ranch "three miles above the First [Rock] Canyon", or about six miles south of Livingston, Montana.

27. Author interview with Carleen Chase, Point of Rocks, Montana, August 29-30, 1993; H.B. Leckler, "A Camping Trip to the Yellowstone National Park", *American Field* 2:382, 19 April 1884.

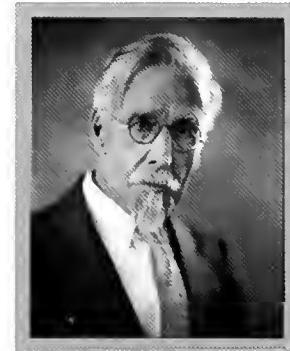
28. Bozeman Avant Courier, 14 July

29. Brust, "John H. Fouch...", *Montana Magazine of Western History* 44 (Spring, 1994):10. Dr. Brust graciously allowed me to publish this photo, Fouch's #47, with this article.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

*Groups of four young buffalo calves*, William H. Jackson, 1872. The full citation from an 1872 descriptive catalogue listing for this photo is: "...domesticated on Major Pease's ranch. They are about four months old, and of the real mountain-bison type, being caught high up in the mountains, about the head of East Fork. Turned in with the cows of the cattle-herd, they very readily took up with the new regime."



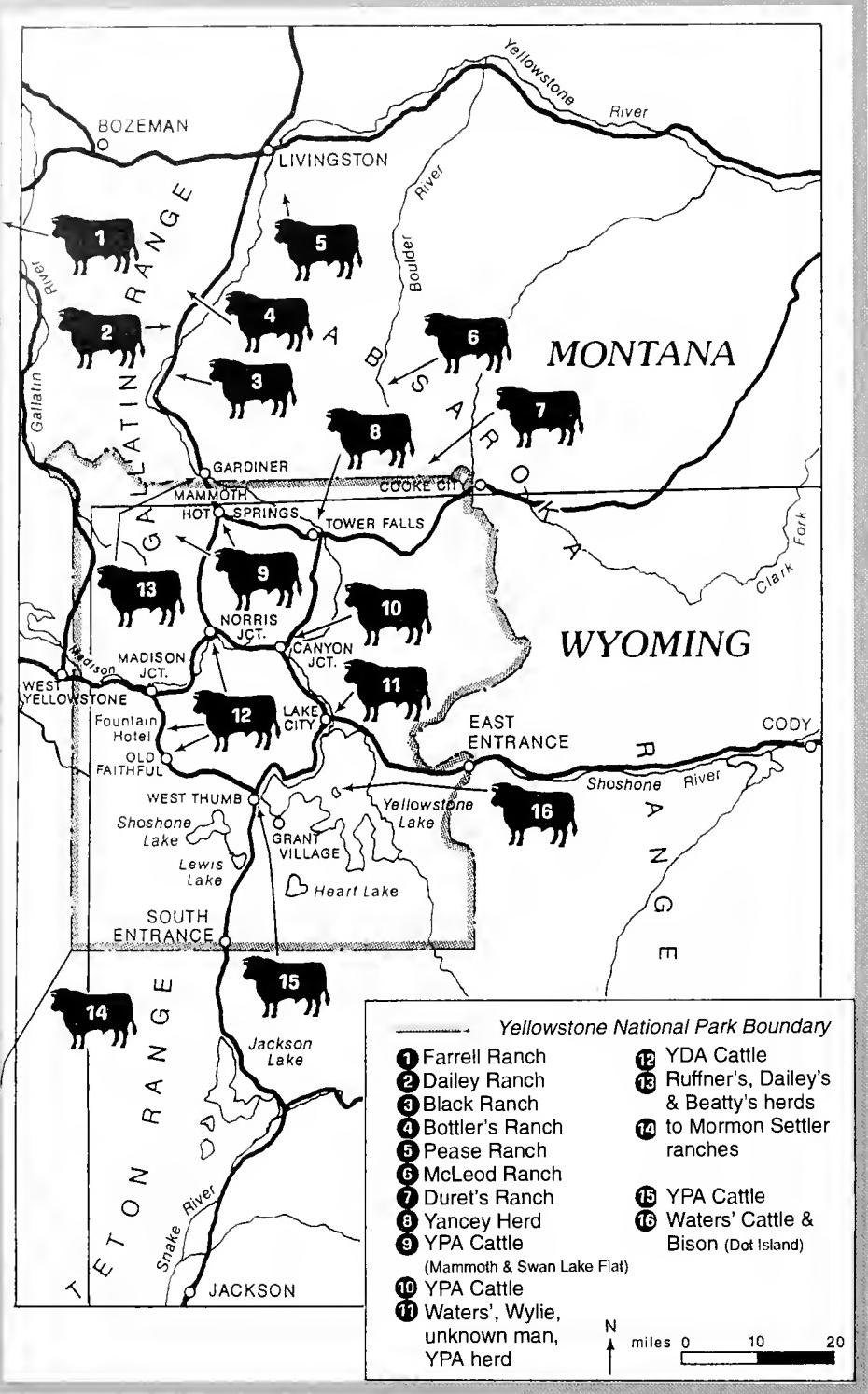
WYOMING STATE MUSEUM

Right: *William H. Jackson*, n.d. Harrison Crandall, photographer.

Below: *North Geyser Basin, the Camp, Hayden Survey Expedition*. William H. Jackson, n.d.



WYOMING STATE MUSEUM



Cattle Herds in Yellowstone National Park. Map by Eileen Skibo.

for brucellosis to be transmitted to bison from cattle, and Dr. Peale's description of bison on the road offers the possibility that Pease bison could have carried it to other wild bison. Even if captured bison from the Bottler, Pease, Farrell, Black and Dailey herds were not released back to the wild, it is possible that cattle from those places made contact with wild bison while either species roamed. There are other early examples of possible contact, some of them even closer to the park.<sup>30</sup>

If Dr. Winthrop Ray's research is correct, brucellosis did not arrive in the Yellowstone country until about 1900, and in his theory the disease was not spread until later. Regardless, earlier opportunities, as well as many later ones, existed in the GYE. Moreover, numerous other possibilities for transmission of brucellosis to bison from cattle existed inside Yellowstone Park before 1917.

While it is known that cattle were introduced into the park before 1886, good record keeping began with Army administration that year.<sup>31</sup> In August, 1886, Acting Superintendent Captain Moses Harris discussed, and subsequently prohibited, the practice of turning stock loose to graze in certain parts

30. Several other early cattle herds are known for the Gardiner, Montana area. A local newspaper stated in 1875 that "Ruffner's, Dailey's, and Beatty's herds are near Gardiner's River, and are in good condition with good feed." These cattle probably grazed in Yellowstone Park proper, but that was not necessary in order to have contact with migratory bison that traditionally moved in and out of the Park. The Dailey family later had a creek named after them in the Park and the Beattys a lake. Their herds probably had opportunities for contacts with Yellowstone Park bison. *Bozeman Times*, 16 February 1875, c.4, p.2, "Gardiner's River"; Lee H. Whittlesey, *Yellowstone Place Names* (Helena: Montana Historical Society, 1988), pp.13,43. At least one cattle ranch, and probably many others at various times, existed on the head of Boulder River northeast of the Park. In a letter dated November 9, 1907, W.F. McLeod, whose ranch at the head of that river resulted in the naming of the town of McLeod, Montana, wrote to the Park Superintendent asking for information on his lost cattle which had strayed over the divide and into the Park. McLeod stated that some of them had been seen during the last storm near the Park line on Slough and Buffalo creeks. This represents an opportunity for cattle to have contacted Yellowstone bison which had long lived in that area. W.F. McLeod to Major [Pitcher], 9 November 1907, Document 7563, YNP Archives, Mammoth.

31. Park superintendent Patrick Conger complained to the Secretary of the Interior in 1883 about the Yellowstone Park Improvement Company's stock, saying, "They have over-run the Park with their herds of horses and cattle." Moreover, the head of the YPI Company, Carroll Hobart, stated to the Secretary that his company that year had thirty horses and 110 cows at Mammoth Hot Springs. Conger to Secretary, 6 November 1883; Hobart to Secretary, 30 November 1883, both in NA, RG 48, no. 62, roll 2 (hard copy at YNP Library).

of the park.<sup>32</sup> Although Harris was unable to discover how many cows had been brought into the park before the army arrived, he began keeping records. Archival correspondence indicates that the Yellowstone Park Association, a Northern Pacific Railroad subsidiary which operated Park hotels and restaurants, brought ninety-one beef cattle and three hundred sheep into Yellowstone in 1887 for purposes of milk and meat.<sup>33</sup>

The Yellowstone Park Association, known as "the company," began to operate hotels and restaurants in the park in 1886 under the management of St. Louis entrepreneur Charles Gibson. For many years land leases were granted to it by the Secretary of the Interior. Often accompanying the leases was written permission to pasture cows, horses, mules, sheep, beef cattle "and such other live stock and fowls as may be necessary to supply and accommodate its guests and employees in the Park." These permits were granted every year from 1889 to at least 1905, and the company grazed cattle at five to seven different locations around the park depending on the year. For ex-

ample, YPA General Manager E.C. Waters noted in 1889 that seventy-eight milk cows were pastured in the park and driven out in the fall, and that 113 beef cattle were pastured and slaughtered. In 1890 two men named Harvat and Klamer slaughtered 210 cattle in the park for YPA. By 1900 the superintendent had fixed the number of YPA beef cattle at one hundred parkwide.<sup>34</sup> That was a lot of cattle which

32. Moses Harris, Circular, 21 August 1886, Army Records, Volume 213, p.1, YNP Archives. Harris did not specify if the stock was cattle or horses or both, but this letter indicates that domestic animals had been routinely allowed to roam in the Park before the Army arrived. See also Harris to Acting Secretary of Interior, 29 November 1886, Volume 213, p.61. The possibility that Park bison got brucellosis from fistulous withers –there were thousands of horses in the Park before 1917– has not been well researched. Dr. Mary Meagher mentioned it in her recent draft with Margaret Meyer. Meagher and Meyer, "On the origin...," n.d. [1994].

33. Charles Gibson to Moses Harris, 15 October 1887, Army Records, Letter Box 3, Document 642, YNP Archives.



YNP MUSEUM COLLECTION

Above: E.J. Sawyer feeding buffalo calf "grunt" with bottle, 1925, photographer unknown. Below: Group of Three Buffalo at Dailey's Ranch, M.T. (Montana Territory), stereo photograph by John H. Fouch, ca.1877.





The Fountain Hotel, 1907

J.E. STIMSON COLLECTION, WYOMING STATE MUSEUM

could mix with Yellowstone bison.

Apparently company cows were not always carefully tended, notwithstanding the army's restrictions on their roaming. That added to the prospect of their encountering bison or other park wildlife.<sup>35</sup> In 1900 YPA grazed at least sixty cows around the park: twenty at park headquarters in Mammoth, twelve at Fountain, nine at Yellowstone Lake, twelve at Canyon, three at Norris, and two each at Old Faithful and West Thumb. Visitor Charles Taylor saw at least one unsupervised cow meandering along the roadway at Old Faithful that year. A permit was issued in May, 1904 to drive sixty-three cows and four bulls to various YPA facilities around the park. Commingling of cattle and bison could have occurred anytime during

such drives when cattle were out of the herders' sight or roamed unsupervised.<sup>36</sup>

YPA kept large numbers of cattle at its Fountain Hotel in Lower Geyser Basin. In 1907, for example, a herd of one hundred cows was corralled there. Even if they were corralled, the possibility existed that individuals could escape and make contact with park bison, or that park bison could get into the corral.<sup>37</sup>

Park cattle permits were also issued to W.W. Wylie's tent camp operations, E.C. Waters' boat company, butchers Van Dyck and Deever, and probably to others. Establishing cattle numbers becomes difficult when these numerous documents are examined. W.W. Wylie ran a tent camp and transportation business in the park from 1884 to 1905. He was allowed by the Department of In-

terior, at the discretion of the Park Superintendent, to keep milk cows at his camps during some years. From 1900 to at least 1904 he was permitted to keep five cows at each of his permanent camps

34. The quote in the paragraph is from: "1889. Lease to Yellowstone Park Association.", Concession Record Series, Box C-16, National Park Service Records, YNP Archives. See also E.C. Waters to F.A. Boutelle, 5 July 1890, Army Records, Letter Box 3, Document 607; Wes Johnson to Boutelle, 1 November 1890, Document 614; Oscar Brown to J.H. Dean, 5 May 1900, Bound Volume 221, p.261, YNP Archives.

35. J.H. Dean to Superintendent, 14 May 1900, Army Records, Letter Box 10, Document 4750, YNP Archives; Charles M. Taylor, Jr., *Touring Alaska and the Yellowstone* (Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs Company, 1901), p.360. The army tried to restrict stock from roaming at large upon the formations or about the sources of water supplies. Oscar Brown to J.H. Dean, 19 May 1900, Volume 221, p.282.

36. Oscar Brown to J.H. Dean, 5 May 1900, Army Records, Volume 221, p.261; Pitcher to YPA "bearer", 26 May 1903, Volume 225, p.130, YNP Archives.

37. H.E. Farrow to S.B.M. Young, 16 August 1907, Document 6488, YNP Archives.



Old Faithful Inn, Y.N.P., 1907

J E STIMSON COLLECTION, WYOMING STATE MUSEUM

in the park. He, too, was routinely granted permits to travel through the park with large numbers of loose cows and horses.<sup>38</sup>

In the northern part of the park, cattle were grazed on Swan Lake Flat. We know that a herd of dairy cattle was placed there in the 1890s by some park concessionaire, probably YPA. A report from that year stated: "Dairy conveniences were constructed in Swan Flat, 4 miles distant [from Mammoth] and out of sight from [the] road, where grass is plentiful."<sup>39</sup> A permit was issued in 1900 for Lewis H. Van Dyck and a man named Deever to drive one hundred cattle over the Mount Holmes Trail from Madison Basin to Swan Lake Flat, apparently to stock the dairy. At least two photos of that dairy herd exist.<sup>40</sup> Begin-

38. Oscar J. Brown to W.W. Wylie, 6 January 1900, Army Records, Volume 221, p.118; John Pitcher to W.W. Wylie, 11 May 1903, Volume 225, p.90; Pitcher to Wylie, 18 May 1903, Volume 225, pp. 105-106; Pitcher to Wylie, 21 March 1904, Volume 226, p.111; First Lieutenant to Wylie "bearer", 10 June 1904, Volume 226, p.241. See also documents 5793,5795,6434,all of 1904-05, YNP Archives.

39. George S. Anderson, *Report of the Acting Superintendent of the Yellowstone National Park...1896...* (Washington: GPO, 1896), p.5.

40. F.J. Haynes photo H-4653, Montana Historical Society, 1905. The other photo was taken between the years 1890-1900. See D.B. Houston, *The Northern Yellowstone Elk, parts III and IV, Vegetation and Habitat Relations* (unpublished, May, 1976), YNP Library, p.146. Oscar J. Brown to "bearer" L.H. Van Dyck, 5 July 1900, Army Records, Volume 221, p.377, YNP Archives.

41. E.A. Hitchcock to John Pitcher, 25 June 1901, Document 3961, YNP Archives. See also Van Dyck and Deever to Pitcher, 25 August 1905, Document 6297, YNP Archives. For general reference see *Gardiner Wonderland*, 18 June 1903; Bill and Doris Whithorn, *Photo History of Aldridge* (Minneapolis: Acme Printing, n.d., ca. 1966), p.87. Regarding cattle permits see, for example, John Pitcher to bearer, 23 May, 10 June, 24 June, 1903; 6-7 June, 1904; all in Army Records, Volume 226, pp.125,173,222,235-236, YNP Archives.

ning in 1901 the same cattle herd was slaughtered for meat. The herd, at least during part of the period, belonged to Van Dyck and Deever. They ran slaughterhouses at Gardiner and Aldridge, Montana, in addition to the one on Swan Lake Flat, and park superintendents routinely issued them cattle permits to drive fifteen to seventy-five cows through Yellowstone.<sup>41</sup> While historically there were fewer bison in Swan Lake Flat than in other places, there is no doubt that bison travelled to that part of the park.

Near Tower Junction "Uncle" John Yancey maintained his Pleasant Valley Hotel and mail station, complete with cattle, from 1882 to 1903. Cattle were there at least part of that time because stagecoach driver Herb French remem-



"Uncle" John Yancey and his dog. E.J. Sawyer, photographer, n.d.

sion.<sup>44</sup> An 1899 letter from Acting Park Superintendent Wilber Wilder to Secretary of the Interior E.A. Hitchcock is especially revealing with regard to that practice at Yellowstone Lake. Wilder stated that he intended to capture four or five bison calves and transport them to Lake, "where Mr. [E.C.] Waters, who runs the boat on Yellowstone Lake, has some milk cows. They can be fed there on fresh milk until the wagon road is open."<sup>45</sup> If this letter reveals only the intent to feed bison on cows' milk, a 1903 letter reveals something close to practice. Superintendent John Pitcher requested fifty dollars from the Department of the Interior to purchase one milk cow

for maintenance of buffalo in Yellowstone National Park. We have on hand two buffalo calves that were captured last spring from the wild herd in the Park, that have to be fed on fresh milk and it is therefore necessary to have a cow for this purpose.<sup>46</sup>

Pitcher stated that an attempt would be made to catch more bison calves and feed them cows' milk. A photo in park archival collections shows a picture of Charles J. "Buffalo" Jones, the buffalo keeper from 1902 to 1905, with two bison calves –probably the same ones mentioned by Pitcher– preparing to nurse on a domestic cow. Although the location of the photo is uncertain, apparently it was made in Yellowstone during the years Jones was buffalo keeper.<sup>47</sup>

Overwhelming evidence for the practice of feeding Yellowstone bison calves on domestic cow milk is found



Liberty Cap Hotel, Mammoth Hot Springs. Stereo view by F. Jay Haynes, n.d.

bered them being driven at intervals to Van Dyck's Gardiner slaughterhouse sometime before 1903:

*Uncle John Yancey used to raise steers out there that would take him four or five days..(maybe five or six steers) to get them to Gardiner. They were just so darn fat that they would only go so far, then they'd lay down. Well, the [accompanying] rider would ride back to Yancey's and stay all night and get up the next morning and come down, chase 'em a little bit farther (early in the morning before it got hot), but they wouldn't go, they'd just lay down, and it'd take them five days to come through Turkey Pen [Pass] to get 'em down to Van Dyck's to sell 'em.*

Obviously these cows were sometimes loose in the park even if they were supposed to be tended. When loose they were free to contact bison.

A dairy herd was maintained at Mammoth Hot Springs. Army scout Ray Little remembered the dairy during his tenure in the Park from 1908 to 1922. A 1904 map documents the location of the dairy approximately 3500 feet west of Liberty Cap on Primrose Creek. Although it is not known when the dairy began or ended, probably it was run by the Yellowstone Park Association.<sup>48</sup>

The feeding of wild bison on dairy cow milk is a practice which has been mentioned by Dr. Margaret Meyer as a possible cause for brucellosis transmis-

42. Herb French in Henry "Society Red" Mallon, interview by Aubrey L. Haines, 5 July, 1961, audiotape 61-2, YNP Library.

43. Interview, Raymond G. Little by Aubrey L. Haines, Gallatin Gateway, Montana, 12 April, 1961, audiotape, YNP Library; Arnold Hague, *Atlas to Accompany Monograph XXXII on the Geology of the Yellowstone National Park* (Washington: GPO, 1904), Topography Sheet XVIII. Cattle permits are Oscar Brown to J.H. Dean, 5 May 1900; Brown to Dean, 19 May 1900, Army Records, Volume 221, pp. 261,282; Pitcher to "bearer", 26 May 1903, Army Records, Volume 225, p.130, YNP Archives.

44. Interview, Dr. Mark Johnson by author, 18 February 1992; Margaret Meyer, "Brucella Abortus," p.11.

45. Wilbur E. Wilder to Secretary of Interior, 20 April 1899, Army Records, Volume 220, p.282, YNP Archives.

46. John Pitcher to Secretary of Interior, 3 July 1903, Army Records, Volume 225, p.257, YNP Archives.

47. Photograph number 3799.125, YNP Museum Collection. For background on Jones in Yellowstone, see Paul Schullery, "Buffalo" Jones and the Bison Herd in Yellowstone: Another Look", *Montana Magazine of Western History* 26 (July, 1976):40-51.



Y.N.P. MUSEUM COLLECTION

C.J. "Buffalo" Jones with bison calves and domestic cow, ca. 1902.

in a magazine article by scout Peter Holt entitled "Catching Buffalo Calves." The article detailed a May, 1903, trip Holt made into Hayden Valley with C.J. Jones, scout James Morrison, and another man for the purpose of catching bison calves and bringing them to Yellowstone Lake to be fed on "mother's milk." Holt described the difficult operation of trapping two bison calves—probably the two mentioned by Pitcher and shown in the photo with Jones—and their transport on a dogdrawn toboggan to Lake. Their attempts to bottle feed the bison calves were unsuccessful, but the winterkeeper for E.C. Waters' boat company informed them "that he had a fresh milk cow at his place" and that the calves could be taken there. The calves were turned loose in Waters' animal pens near Lake Hotel and the strange experiment began. Holt's fascinating description of the process tells us that the bison calves

took readily to cow's milk and that the process continued for months afterward:

*one [calf] was taken out of the pen and the experiment of having a wild buffalo calf suck a domestic cow was tried. To our surprise the calf started to suck voraciously, butting with great force. The cow glared at him with a look of mingled surprise and suspicion, but fortunately made no attempt to kick him. His sides slowly filled out, and just before he reached what we considered the bursting point, we pulled him away, kicking and struggling, and returned him to his stall, and the other calf was given the*

*same treatment with the same result. They were so pleased after their feed that they danced around in their stall with joy, then lay down, and grunting with satisfaction, went to sleep. We had no further worry about their future. They were fed three times a day and gained rapidly in size. During the first few days of their captivity we assisted at their feeding and watched them care-*

*fully for any unfavorable symptoms, due to a change of milk and environment, but in spite of the great change in their condition from the bright snow fields to a dark stall in a stable, from their mother's milk to that of a domestic cow, they thrived and grew.<sup>48</sup>*

Holt added that the two bison calves were later taken to park headquarters where they were placed with a domestic cow and, after being weaned, were placed with the Mammoth bison herd. Here is mouth-to-teat documentation of wild bison fed directly upon the milk of a domestic cow for extended periods of time and then placed back into the Mammoth buffalo herd to associate with other bison. Transmission of brucellosis, if the domestic cows had it, was probably quite direct in this fashion.

In the task of artificially increasing

48. Peter Holte (sic), "Catching Buffalo Calves, II," *Forest and Stream* 75:490, 24 September 1910. Interestingly, the practice of feeding cows' milk to park bison had been thought of as early as the 1870s. According to historian Aubrey Haines, in approximately 1877 Park Superintendent P.W. Norris gave permission to James Beatty to keep cows in Lamar Valley, because Norris wanted to use some of the milk for buffalo calves there. He wanted to do this in order to domesticate bison, but the record does not indicate if it was ever done. Aubrey L. Haines, typescript of his five day tour of Yellowstone National Park, 10-15 August 1993, YNP Library, pp.21,35.



J.E. STIMSON COLLECTION, WYOMING STATE MUSEUM

Yellowstone Lake Boat, Leaving Thump, Yellowstone National Park, 1907

the numbers of Yellowstone bison, Jones brought Montana and Texas bison into Yellowstone Park to breed them with bison. It is thus possible that park bison could have contracted brucellosis from alien bison. Nevertheless, even if Yellowstone's initial brucellosis transmission occurred that way, numerous cattle contacts were in place to make sure the disease was well spread.

**T**he existence of several herds of cattle at Yellowstone Lake is corroborated by numerous letters in Yellowstone Park archives. Lake cattle were located near the otherwise isolated Pelican Valley bison herd. Documents show that E.C. Waters, first a manager for YPA then President of the Yellowstone Lake Boat Company, kept cattle at his facility near Lake Hotel during many of the years he was in charge of the boats (1892-1907). In some years Waters kept his cattle there year-round. Late in 1900 the park superintendent ordered him to remove twenty calves and one milk cow from Lake and to keep only two head for the winter. In May, 1902 he wintered two cows and twelve calves and in March of 1904 he had ten cows, several calves and three bulls. A similar number was permitted in 1905, and in 1906 Waters asked permission to leave two cows at Lake that winter.

Daniel Miles, son of A.W. Miles, who ran businesses for a long time in Livingston and Yellowstone Park, re-

membered the milk cows that boatman Waters kept at Lake from 1903 to 1907 because Miles purchased some of them. Miles also remembered that they were kept there in the winter.<sup>49</sup>

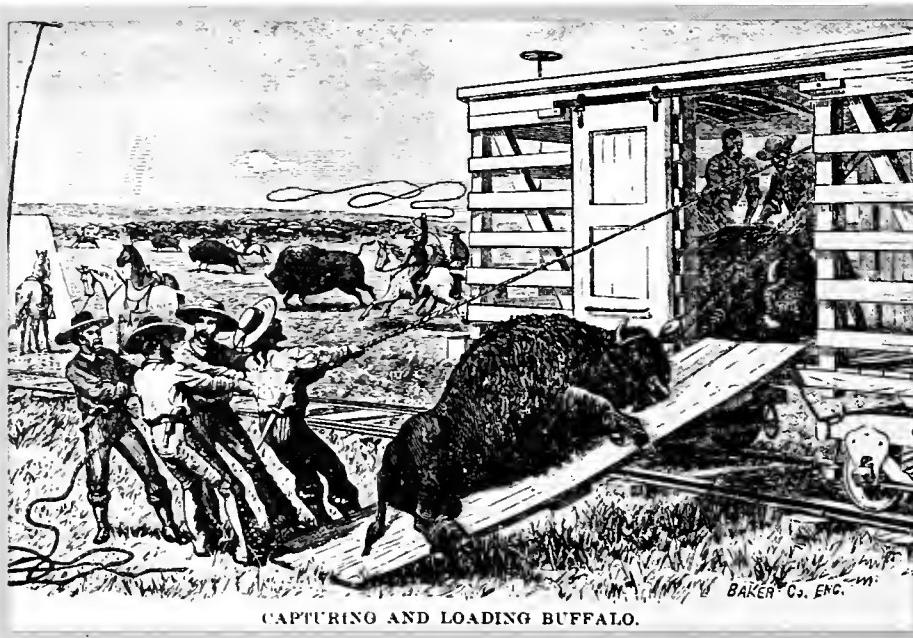
*I had a few dealings with him [Waters] but the one I remember the best was a time when I bought some milk cows from him. Father called me on the phone and said that he had bought 15 milk cows from him and I was to pick them out. He had paid 35 dollars a head for them. He [Waters] had a winter keeper at the Lake and he had a few cows which he kept there all winter. I went*

where he also kept bison. Contacts between bison and domestic cattle could certainly have occurred there.<sup>51</sup> Following the removal of Waters in 1907 the bison were released into the park, presumably to mingle with other bison and possibly taking brucellosis with them. Waters also wintered his Dot Island bison in corrals at Lake Hotel near, or with, his cattle herd. In 1903 the park superintendent noted that the "large number of them [cattle] is what has constituted a nuisance in the past."<sup>52</sup> All of these cattle could have had contact with park bison, a herd of which lived in nearby Pelican Valley.

Mr. Waters' complained that his cattle were required to be penned while other cattle at Lake were not, an indication that the latter were allowed to roam free, at least in 1903 and probably during other years as well. This would have provided opportunity for contact with park bison, including the nearby Pelican herd. A friend of Waters described in a letter the free-ranging nature of YPA and Wylie Company cattle herds at Lake during the season

of 1903.

*I talked with Philip Segelstrom, the cowboy who cares for the cows of the Yellowstone Park Association, in regard to his instructions about herding their cows. He stated in reply to my question that he had no instructions [from YPA] as to where or how he should herd his 12 head of cows only that he must keep them off the main traveled road...I also talked with Mr. Rush, one of the employees of Mr. Wylie's at Yellowstone Lake in regard to the handling of the cows belonging to the Wylie Camping Co. He stated to me that they did not have to herd their cows and that they could run anywhere. I know Mr. Wylie's employees do no herding and*



"Capturing and Loading Buffalo," Baker Co. engraving, from *Historic Sketches of the Cattle Trade of the West and Southwest*, by Joseph G. McCoy (Kansas City: Ramsey, Millett & Hudson, 1874).

*up and had a talk with him and he told me the best cows of that number.<sup>50</sup>*

Some of these cattle were kept by Waters from 1896 to 1907 on Dot Island

50. Daniel N. Miles, unpublished letter/reminiscence to Mr. Kennedy, 21 January 1962, Montana Historical Society, no. SC-69, p.3.

51. George W. Goode to E.C. Waters, 27 October 1900, Army Records, Volume 222, p.92; Pitcher to Secretary of Interior, 14 May 1903; Pitcher "Circular", 16 May 1903; Pitcher to "bearer", 29 May 1903; Pitcher to Waters, 4 June 1903; Pitcher to Waters, 22 June 1903, Army Records, Volume 225, pp.103,144,157,213, YNP Archives.

52. Aubrey L. Haines, *The Yellowstone Story, II* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 1977), pp.75-77; Pitcher to Secretary of Interior, 14 May 1903, Volume 225, p.96, YNP Archives. An inspection of Waters' animal pens at Lake Hotel in June, 1907 revealed filthy pens and mistreated animals. Four pens contained four buffalo cows, two bulls and one calf, while a fifth, adjacent pen contained cattle stalls. Chester A. Lindsay to S.B.M. Young, 13 June 1907, Exhibit L, in item 33, folder 1, YNP Archives.

49. Oscar Goode to E.C. Waters, 27 October 1900, Army Records, Volume 222, p.92; Thomas Ryan to Waters, 24 May 1902, Document 5254; Ryan to Acting Superintendent, 17 March 1904, Document 5786; Ryan to Acting Superintendent, 11 May 1905, Document 5788; Waters to Acting Superintendent, 11 October 1906, Document 6333, YNP Archives.

that his cows are allowed to run at will...I also affirm that the Hotel cows have been allowed to run at will nights and days the most of the season.<sup>53</sup>

Pelican Valley bison also could have contacted at least one other cattle herd known to have been at Yellowstone Lake. In 1908 the corporal in charge of Lake Soldier Station stated:

a man whose name he did not know had requested permission to herd some cattle on the flats near the lake. The Corporal could not communicate with [headquarters] so he permitted the man to herd the cattle on ground back from the road until the Acting Superintendent's decision could be obtained.<sup>54</sup>

These cattle apparently roamed free in the Lake area for an unknown length of time and could have made contact with Pelican Valley bison.

There were other possibilities for cattle-bison contacts in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. The existence of domestic cattle west of Yellowstone Park awaits definite documentation, but Gilman Sawtell and his partner Levi Wurtz were at Henry's Lake by 1871 and probably had cattle. Ranchman Dick Rock kept buffalo in pens near West Yellowstone, Montana prior to 1902, and their exposure to cattle there was certainly possible.<sup>55</sup> The owner of Dwelle's, a stage station and hotel west of West Yellowstone in operation from the mid-1890s to about 1907, kept cattle, according to Del and Henry Jenkins, who wrangled them. Jenkins reported that another excellent stock ranch was located halfway between Dwelle's and Monida, Montana, on the far western fringe of the GYE.<sup>56</sup> Finally, ranchman Joseph "Frenchy" Duret is known to have kept as many as forty cows on his ranch between 1914 and 1922 and probably before that period, as well. Duret's ranch was just north of Yellowstone's north boundary and close to park bison in the

53. Lila G. Camp in *Explanation and Argument of the Yellowstone Lake Boat Co. Yellowstone National Park by E.C. Waters and Copy of Affidavits and Contracts Pertaining to the Same* (Ripon, Wisconsin: E.L. Howe, 1903), p.28, in Item 33, folder 1, YNP Archives.

54. E.L. Grisell to Adjutant, 17 June 1908, Document 7087, YNP Archives.

55. See Nolie Mumey, *Rocky Mountain Dick* (Richard W. Rock). *Stories of His Adventures in Capturing Wild Animals* (Denver: Range Press, 1953).

56. Interview, Henry Del Jenkins by Aubrey L. Haines, Jackson, Wyoming, 3 July 1961, audiotape at YNP Library.



J.E. STIMSON COLLECTION, WYOMING STATE MUSEUM

Top: Buffalo Cows on Dot Island, Y.N.P. (via) Union Pacific, 1907

Below: Buffalo on Dot Island, Y.N.P., (via) Union Pacific, 1907



J.E. STIMSON COLLECTION, WYOMING STATE MUSEUM

Devillies {sic} Inn, 1907. Probably Dwelle's stage station and hotel, West Yellowstone

Lamar and Slough Creek areas. This information is corroborated by Warren Hutchings, a resident of Livingston, Montana whose father, Peck, was Yellowstone's assistant buffalo keeper in the early 1920s. Warren remembered that Frenchy purposely grazed cattle inside the park until his death in 1922. Hutchings said that whenever someone from the park would show up there, Frenchy would pretend to be "just starting to look for them." Frenchy's cattle had many years to make contact with Yellowstone bison.<sup>57</sup>

In summary, although no one knows for sure how Yellowstone's bison contracted brucellosis, biologists now believe domestic cattle carried the disease to them. They also think that cattle played a similar role in regard

to brucellosis found in other western bison herds. And they agree that the disease could have lain unnoticed in Yellowstone bison for some, even many, years. Although the disease was first documented in Yellowstone in 1917, neither scientists nor historians know when it arrived in the park. Dr. Winthrop Ray believes it arrived in the *American West* by 1900, and states that it was reported in Montana by 1903.

Documentation makes it clear that

57. William Marshall Rush, *Wild Animals of the Rockies: Adventures of a Forest Ranger* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1942), pp.20-21; interview, Warren Hutchings by author, Mammoth Hot Springs, Wyoming, 1 September 1993.

58. Meagher and Meyer, "On the origin of brucellosis...," unpublished draft [1994], p.18. Meagher says the alien bison brought into the park are known to have been uninfected with brucellosis.

59. Author's conversation with Tom Tankersley, 5 June 1992, YNP, Wyoming.

bison in Yellowstone had numerous opportunities for contact with possibly infected domestic cattle during early park history from 1872 to 1885, and during the army's period of administration from 1886 to 1918. It was in the latter period, according to the best information available, that brucellosis arrived in the West. The practice of feeding bison calves on domestic cows' milk is significant in tracing possible trans-



mission routes.

There is one other possible origin of the disease in Yellowstone bison. The manipulation of the park herd in 1902 through importation of Montana and Texas cattle for interbreeding purposes is one. Dr. Mary Meagher suggests the less likely possibility that Yellowstone bison contracted brucellosis through fistulous withers on horses. That possibility awaits further investigation by

scientists and historians.<sup>58</sup>

Certainly there was no shortage of cattle in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem during the years 1869-1917, nor was there a shortage of opportunities for bison and cattle to intermingle. Tom Tankersley, historian at Yellowstone, says flatly:

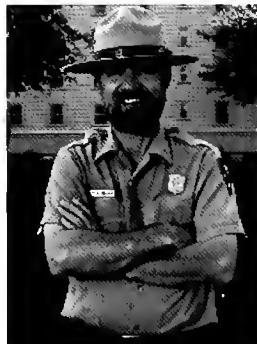
*"There were cows all over the place!"<sup>59</sup>*

Brucellosis controversy and great debates among Yellowstone bison managers, federal and state officials, Montana and Wyoming stockmen, and animal rights activists will no doubt continue for years to come. The historic role of domestic cattle in the controversy is a piece in a complex puzzle, and its study gives rise to the need for collaboration between scientists and historians.



FOR A PERSON WHOSE FIRST WORK EXPERIENCE WITH THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE WAS PICKING UP GARBAGE ALONG THE ROAD, LEE H. WHITTLESEY (B.1950) HAS COME A LONG WAY. DURING THE TWENTY YEARS HE WORKED FOR YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK HE HELD VARIOUS JOBS INCLUDING TOUR BUS DRIVER AND TOUR GUIDE, LAW ENFORCEMENT RANGER, PARK NATURALIST, AND COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST FOR THE PARK CONCESSIONER. SANDWICHED INTO THOSE YEARS WERE STINTS AS A COMMERCIAL BROADCASTER IN TEXAS, OKLAHOMA AND MONTANA AND THE COMPLETION OF A LAW DEGREE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA. IN 1992 HE BEGAN HIS CURRENT JOB AS HISTORICAL ARCHIVIST FOR THE PARK THAT HAS BEEN CALLED THE CENTERPIECE OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM.

WHITTLESEY IS AUTHOR OF *Yellowstone Place Names* (HELENA: MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESS, 1988) AND ITS LONGER, SISTER VERSION *Wonderland Nomenclature: A History of the Place Names of Yellowstone National Park, 2 vols* (HELENA: MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MICROFICHE, 1988). HE



MARK JUNG

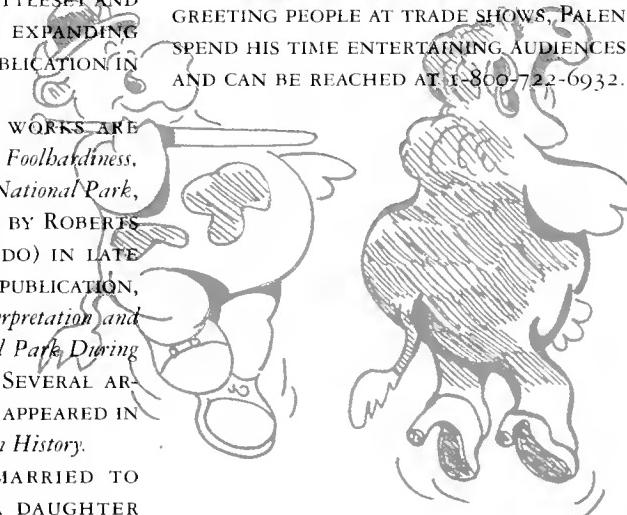
CO-AUTHORED, WITH YELLOWSTONE SENIOR EDITOR, PAUL SCHULLERY, A HISTORY OF LARGE ANIMALS IN THE YELLOWSTONE REGION, "THE DOCUMENTARY RECORD OF WOLVES AND RELATED WILDLIFE SPECIES IN THE YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK AREA PRIOR TO 1882." THE STUDY IS PART OF A REPORT TO CONGRESS, WOLVES FOR YELLOWSTONE (YELLOWSTONE: YELLOWSTONE RESEARCH DIVISION, 1992). WHITTLESEY AND SCHULLERY CURRENTLY ARE EXPANDING THE STUDY FOR EVENTUAL PUBLICATION IN BOOK FORM.

WHITTLESEY'S RECENT WORKS ARE *Death in Yellowstone: Accidents, Foolhardiness, and Murder in the World's First National Park*, SCHEDULED FOR PUBLICATION BY ROBERTS RINEHART (NIWOT, COLORADO) IN LATE 1995, AND ANOTHER PLANNED PUBLICATION, *Touring in Old Yellowstone: Interpretation and Visitor Education in the National Park During Stagecoach Days, 1872-1920*. SEVERAL ARTICLES BY WHITTLESEY HAVE APPEARED IN *Montana the Magazine of Western History*.

LEE WHITTLESEY IS MARRIED TO TAMALA AND THEY HAVE A DAUGHTER

NAMED TESS. WHITTLESEY'S OFFICE AND THE PARK ARCHIVES ARE LOCATED IN THE HORACE ALBRIGHT VISITORS CENTER AT YNP HEADQUARTERS IN MAMMOTH.

*COWS ALL OVER THE PLACE*  
JERRY PALEN, ILLUSTRATOR OF "COWS ALL OVER THE PLACE," IS THE AUTHOR OF *Stampede*, THE LARGEST RURAL CARTOON SERIES IN THE U.S. AND CANADA. RAISED NEAR CHEYENNE, WYOMING, HE IS A PARTNER IN THE PUBLISHING COMPANY, LAFFING COW PRESS, LOCATED IN SARATOGA, WYOMING. IN ADDITION TO SIGNING HIS BOOKS AND GREETING PEOPLE AT TRADE SHOWS, PALEN SPEND HIS TIME ENTERTAINING AUDIENCES AND CAN BE REACHED AT 1-800-722-6932.





J. E. STUSSON COLLECTION, WYOMING STATE MUSEUM

*Dr. Edward Lauzer Ranch, Interior of Library, Cora, Wyoming, 1937*

*John W. Davis*

A VAST AMOUNT OF TROUBLE:  
A HISTORY OF THE  
SPRING CREEK RAID  
REVIEW BY GENE M. GRESSLEY

*Jim Garry*

THIS OL' DROUGHT AIN'T BROKE  
US YET (BUT WE'RE ALL BENT  
PRETTY BAD): STORIES OF THE  
AMERICAN WEST  
REVIEW BY STEVE WINGATE

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THE DUST ROSE LIKE SMOKE: THE  
SUBJUGATION OF THE ZULU AND  
THE SIOUX  
REVIEW BY GERALD THOMPSON

*Bruce Hampton*

CHILDREN OF GRACE: THE NEZ  
PERCE WAR OF 1877  
REVIEW BY STEVEN C. SCHULTE

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SHADOW ON THE TETONS: DAVID  
E. JACKSON AND THE CLAIMING  
OF THE AMERICAN WEST  
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RAILROAD SIGNATURES ACROSS  
THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST  
REVIEW BY KEITH L. BRYANT, JR.

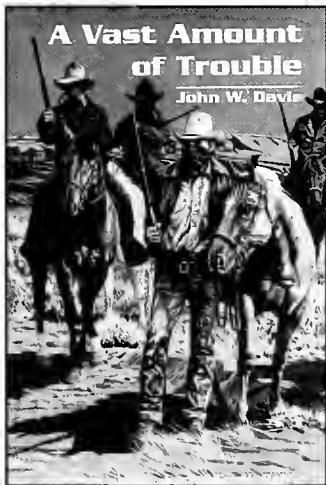
*Thomas T. Smith, editor*

A DOSE OF FRONTIER  
SOLDIERING: THE MEMOIRS OF  
CORPORAL E.A. BODE, FRONTIER  
REGULAR INFANTRY, 1877-1882  
REVIEW BY JOHN D. McDERMOTT

*Ferenc Morton Szasz, editor*

GREAT MYSTERIES OF THE WEST  
REVIEW BY BARBARA ALLEN BOGART

## A VAST AMOUNT OF TROUBLE: A HISTORY OF THE SPRING CREEK RAID



BY JOHN W. DAVIS

BOULDER: UNIVERSITY PRESS OF COLORADO, 1993. XI AND 289 PAGES. ILLUSTRATIONS, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX. CLOTH \$22.50

Violence in America today is a perpetual preoccupation of Americans, a statement as uncontested as it is unoriginal. Whether one views the six o'clock news or reads the front page of the *Denver Post*, his senses are accosted by the latest drive by shooting or robbery of a Mini-Mart. In the perpetual media poll, crime has moved ahead of the economy as the number one societal obsession.

Nor has violence been neglected by historians. In the recent past several books have appeared including the monumental *Nation* by Richard Slotkin and the sophisticated *No Duty to Retreat* by Richard Maxwell Brown, plus a plethora of publications on subjects ranging from violence in the 1960s to Robert Utley's primal *Billy the Kid*.

Yet for all the attention given by historians to the American psyche and heritage of violence, whether on 42nd Street or the frontier, surprisingly little historical attention has been focused on cattleman-sheepman conflicts. For instance, in their overviews of violence neither Slotkin nor Brown mentions the cattle-sheep wars. So few are the books, even of a general nature, in any bibliography that the titles fairly leap to the readers attention: Edward N.

Wentworth's *America's Sheep Trails* and Shepherd's *Empire*; Bill O'Neal's *Cattlemen vs. Sheepherders*. Historians have left the sagebrush fields of gore to the manufacturers of blood and thunder such as Zane Grey, Max Brand, William MacLeod Raine and Will Henry to name a few. Nor have the creators of celluloid fantasy been left behind as the names of directors such as John Ford, Delmar Daves and Samuel Peckinpah affirm. This historical neglect is even more mystifying when you read Bill O'Neal's vital statistics of the cattleman-sheepman wars. O'Neal notes that between 1873 and 1921 there were 128 incidents that resulted in the deaths of 28 sheepmen, 16 cattlemen and 53,254 sheep.

All the above underscores the significance of *A Vast Amount of Trouble*. Combining his legal training, intensive research in primary sources—especially grand jury minutes—and sophisticated insights into human nature, John W. Davis has removed the Spring Creek raid from the folklore of the West and brought it front and center on the historical stage. We now know as much as we probably ever will of what happened on that fateful night of April 2, 1909 when three sheepmen were murdered, their wagons burned and over 2,000 sheep were destroyed.

The source which made possible removal of the heavy fog of myth enveloping the events on Tensleep Creek was Davis' discovery of grand jury minutes in the Lola Homsher Collection at the American Heritage Center. In 1979 Homsher bequeathed to the Center her "Uncle Percy's" (Big Horn County Prosecuting Attorney, Percy Metz) legal and historical files, and John W. Davis was the first researcher to explore what has become the primary source for the Tensleep raid.

There were several pivotal events precluding the November 10, 1909 guilty verdict in the Tensleep raiders case. First, the young twenty-five-year-old county prosecuting attorney Percy Metz had the wisdom or good fortune to realize that such a complex case was beyond his legal expertise. Therefore he obtained the help of three experienced and talented attorneys: his father W. S. Metz, E. E. Enterline of Sheridan and William Simpson of Cody. These three masterminded the prosecution's legal strategy. Foremost in their tactics was an imaginative use of the grand jury. As Davis observes, "A grand jury will intimidate the boldest of witnesses." (p. 76) Enterline and Simpson issued over a hundred subpoenas. Witness after witness and neighbor after neighbor were paraded before the grand jury. Bereft of counsel, the witnesses faced the stern prosecutors. Unaware of what a neighbor had testified, several witnesses became unnerved or

decided that forthrightness was the better part of valor. Their testimony, especially that of Fred Greet, W. H. Goodrich and Bounce Helmer, placed all seven of the raiders at the scene. Indeed, their recollections along with those of two raiders to turn state's evidence, Charlie Faris and Billy Keyes, constructed a solid, if not an air-tight, case for the prosecution.

Another gift was handed the prosecution by the defense when the latter, attempting to shoehorn cattlemen onto the jury panel, repeatedly challenged the first list of jurors. The resulting jury was basically a group of farmers. Especially devastating to the defense's cause was W. H. Packard. Packard was a bee-keeper, a bishop of the Mormon community of Burlington and a natural leader. The jury selection process highlighted a major problem for the defense. Simply put, the majority of the residents of the Big Horn Basin did not endorse the vigilantism of the raiders.

By the time the trial opened on No-

vember 4th the prosecution's case was almost anticlimactic. Herbert Brink, one of the most vulnerable of the seven raiders and one who had done more than the rest to entrap himself both by testimony and braggadocio, was tried first. Six days later the jury convicted him of first degree murder. The Brink conviction, plus realization by the cattlemen of their untenable position with the public, motivated a settlement conference. As a result, all the raiders were sentenced to a variety of charges including second degree murder. By 1914 none of the raiders was in the penitentiary at Rawlins.

The Greek tragedy on Spring Creek had been played out. With felicitous style, intensive research and a conservative yet imaginative use of his evidence, John W. Davis has made a major contribution not only to the history of Wyoming but to the historiography of the American West.

GENE M. GRESSLEY  
HISTORIAN  
LARAMIE, WYOMING

It has been said that history is never more important than when it is being lost. If this is true, then the timing of Jim Garry's book could not be better. As the Rocky Mountain West becomes increasingly suburbanized by an influx of newcomers and overdevelopment, its residents have one, final opportunity to preserve the life and lore that is quickly being effaced by technological progress. The Sheridan-based storyteller has assembled his tales into a coherent and readable book, equal parts entertainment and education, as the best oral histories always are.

Garry does not succumb, as many storytellers might, to the temptation of mere translation. He easily could have limited himself to telling story after story, shifting vernacular and point of view in an attempt to paint a panorama of the region's history. But Garry un-

derstands that this approach would lead to confusion and ties together tales from his own broad and well-considered perspective. The chapters "A Man on Foot" deals with the all-important horse, "Come Technology" treats the arrival of the automobile, and "It Ain't Fatal" represents an attempt not simply to replicate old-timers' stories, but to follow their subjects' history and changing place in Western culture. This unifying approach amplifies the significance of tales that might, in a less structured book, have been lost in an entertaining mix.

"The West is our mythic landscape," Garry writes in his chapter on cowboys, "and people have trouble perceiving myth accurately." The stories in this book are not necessarily all true. Some are presented as purposely ambiguous

## THIS OL' DROUGHT AIN'T BROKE US YET (BUT WE'RE ALL BENT PRETTY BAD): STORIES OF THE AMERICAN WEST



BY JIM GARRY

NEW YORK: ORION BOOKS, 1992. XII  
AND 228 PAGES. CLOTH \$18.00

or out-and-out tall tales. But their truth quotient matters less than their emotional value to the individual who hears or reads them. Knowing how to perceive myth, instructs Garry, is something we must learn. Only then can we understand the lesson hidden beyond the face value of stories.

A sense of autobiography pervades *This Ol' Drought* and adds to its depth. Garry speaks throughout of his own, western mythic education which began in Texas and continues today. It does not seem possible, in Garry's way of thinking, to have too close an understanding of nature or how humans interact with it. As the book progresses we hear not only the stories recounted, but the inner voice of a man who listens carefully to his own surroundings. Garry picks up his subjects—law and order, rodeo, government-like geodes and examines them as light reflects from them at a variety of angles.

## THE DUST ROSE LIKE SMOKE: THE SUBJUGATION OF THE ZULU AND THE SIOUX



BY JAMES O. GUMP

LINCOLN: UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA PRESS, 1994. MAPS, ILLUSTRATIONS, NOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX. XII AND 178 PAGES. CLOTH \$25.00

"A major purpose of this study," writes James O. Gump, "is to issue another challenge to American 'exceptionalism.'" (p. 2) Throughout this impressive book the author, a specialist in African history, demonstrates that nineteenth-century United States history should be viewed as part of an international phenomenon in which imperialistic powers subjugated native peoples. The opening phase of a global economic system used technology and wealth to establish hegemony over less technologically developed peoples. Some academic readers will surely think that they've heard all this before, but Gump makes a strong case for his theoretical framework. Moreover, he takes his study far beyond simple stereotypes of evil imperialists and saintly native victims. *The Dust Rose Like Smoke* rightly shows how indigenous people

In his opening chapter Garry recounts a moment from college days when he looked up the word "ecology" (from *oikos*, the Greek word for house). "Suddenly, clearly, I knew the meaning of the word and what would actually be required to understand ecology, to understand not just one room of the house or just the plumbing or the electrical system, but the whole house." *This Ol' Drought* deals with that group of people whose house is closer to the land than any other. The ranchers and cowboys of the Rocky Mountain West may be the last Americans who will have the opportunity to build their community in and around nature, and Garry preserves their lore at time when we need to remember it most.

STEVE WINGATE  
DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL FILM SERIES  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO  
BOULDER

played a significant part in their own history and even helped determine the ultimate outcome.

While the author emphasizes the commonality of the British colonial experience in Africa and the American experience in the Far West, the differences he observes may be the most important contribution of his work. He notes that both Sioux and Zulus were imperialistic in their own right, and their expansions in power and domain came at the expense of other native peoples. But there the similarity seems to end. Sioux expansion to the west and southwest in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries fostered an economic and geographical independence of the various Lakota bands that made authoritarian control by an individual Sioux leader impossible. In contrast, the Zulu kingdom was created in the early 1800s by King Shaka (c.1787-1828) who consolidated formerly inde-

pendent clans under the absolute control of a centralized state. Zulu life henceforth would be regimented in almost every aspect. However, both peoples continued to share one overriding characteristic: a pre-industrial status which prevented them from being able to compete with their American and British conquerors. The latter nations possessed industrial economies with the ability to supply a seemingly endless quantity of sophisticated manufactured weapons.

Of course, the goals of the United States and Great Britain differed markedly and affected the course of Sioux and Zulu history. U.S. Indian policy fostered Native American removal to isolated places where tribes would exist outside of mainstream society. The reservation policy permitted millions of pioneers to utilize former Indian lands for the production of food supplies and raw materials needed by industrial America. Reservations marginalized native peoples and kept them from blocking the march of progress.

British colonial policy in southern Africa was very different. Colonial officials realized that for the development of natural resources, they needed Zulus and other tribes brought into the economy as laborers. To achieve this end the British developed a sophisticated approach that relied heavily on the cooperation of Zulu leadership

which had already developed a complex agricultural labor system. Once individual Zulus and other indigenous people made the transition to wage laborers it was not difficult to kick over the hollow shell of tribal independence.

Much of *The Dust Rose Like Smoke* concentrates on the battles of Little Big-horn (1876) and Isandhlwana (1879), total defeats for regular military forces. But this book is far more than a comparison of the events surrounding two battles. Both academics and general readers will be fascinated by the author's insights. A sure sign that Gump has achieved success is that many will wish that he had written a longer study. In only 139 pages of text, some aspects of comparative history could only be mentioned in passing. Nevertheless, Gump's superb work will surely serve as a model for additional comparative studies. With the publication of *The Dust Rose Like Smoke: The Subjugation of the Zulu and the Sioux*, historians of American history, and particularly historians of the American West, can enjoy an analytical book that admirably fulfills the highest expectations of comparative history.

GERALD THOMPSON  
PROFESSOR OF HISTORY  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO  
TOLEDO, OHIO

bers and technology.

Bruce Hampton has retold this dramatic story in what surely will be regarded as one of the finest studies of this tragic episode in nineteenth century Indian-White relations. Using a fast-paced writing style that will broaden its appeal beyond specialists in American Indian history, Hampton tells his story with verve and color. Yet *Children of Grace* remains anchored within the standards of the best recent scholarship in American

## CHILDREN OF GRACE: THE NEZ PERCE WAR OF 1877



BY BRUCE HAMPTON

NEW YORK: HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY, 1994. 407 PAGES. MAPS, ILLUSTRATIONS, NOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX. CLOTH \$27.95

Western history.

*Children of Grace* is much more than a retelling of a familiar story. Hampton challenges standard interpretations of the war's unfolding. A compelling portrait of American military leader Oliver Otis Howard emerges. Stubborn to a fault, Howard made his decisions based upon a desire to rehabilitate his tarnished Civil War military reputation. He and other white military authorities utterly underestimated their Nez Perce foes. It even may be argued that Howard's misreading of Nez Perce intentions fanned a relatively minor conflict into a major Indian war. Howard made the mistake that thousands of white leaders had previously made by assuming that all Indian decisions emanated from one, powerful and charismatic leader, in this case Chief Joseph. Hampton successfully argues that the legend surrounding Chief Joseph's leadership was created early in the conflict by Howard to amplify his own military feats. It looked far better to defeat a cunning and skilled genius than to try to understand and depict in official reports the reality of Indian leadership. Decentralized and faction-riddled, Nez Perce leadership suffered from some of the same internal squabbles that plagued Howard's own army.

Hampton's analysis of interaction between the Nez Perce and the Anglo-American civilian population is also fascinating. White attitudes toward Indians are usually characterized as one of universal scorn and disdain. Hampton demonstrates that the Nez Perce and other tribal groups often had reputations somewhere between the usual good or bad Indian stereotypes. In short, *Children of Grace* contains a plea to analyze the complexity behind both white and Indian racial attitudes more carefully. Hampton also demonstrates how ambitious Western politicians seized upon the white population's fear of Indians to build or revive political careers. Indian conflicts could be good political news to an

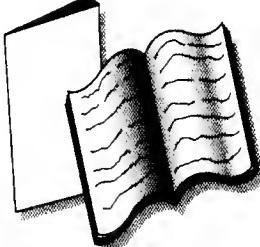
ambitious politician.

Hampton incorporates into the narrative a commentary on his sources, noting strengths, weaknesses and the political coloration of his major reference works. In several cases, significant acts of whitewashing occurred in key memoirs inspired by the Nez Perce War, and most twentieth century interpretations of the event have uncritically relied upon these Anglo-American accounts. Hampton carefully sifts through both Indian and white accounts, giving the book a balance rarely found in studies of frontier warfare. Using Indian accounts Hampton is able to argue convincingly that General John Gibbon's command indiscriminately killed women and children at the Battle of the Big Hole, a claim that most published accounts of the war have either denied or not addressed because of their reli-

ance upon white authorities.

Just when the Western book-buying public had reached the conclusion that little more could be written about nineteenth century Indian-White warfare, books like Robert Utley's *The Lance and the Shield*, James Welch's recent *Killing Custer*, and *Children of Grace* have appeared, adding depth and perspective to topics that seemingly had reached saturation. Hampton's study proves that a good story combined with excellent research and lively writing will never go out of style.

STEVEN C. SCHULTE  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY  
MESA STATE COLLEGE  
GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO



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With this, his first book, John C. Jackson has filled a void in the history of the American fur trade. The accomplishments of David E. Jackson have largely been overlooked by most historians even though a beautiful valley in northwestern Wyoming bears his name. Examining the experiences of one individual, the author demonstrates that the fur trade between 1822 and 1830 was a business venture rather than the aimless adventuring of trappers.

David Edward Jackson was raised in Virginia in a family whose members ranged from Congressional Representative, George Jackson, to Civil War General Stonewall Jackson. He grew up listening to family discussions concerning the future of the nation and watching the world changing before him. After he left Virginia at age 33 and headed to the Rocky Mountains, he would play a significant role changing the landscape. David Jackson made the acquaintance of Andrew Henry during the Panic of 1819 when Jackson's western investments were nearly worthless. These economic difficulties, coupled with the lure of Henry's mountain adventures, enticed Jackson to team up with Henry and his partner William Ashley in a joint venture in the fur trade. Ashley handled the business end in Missouri, while Henry supervised upstream activities. David Jackson was recruited for his experience in handling men.

The lure of federal land in Missouri, the lucrative business of the fur trade, and the opportunity to buy mules and horses in California and sell them at a profit in the south are all interwoven in this biography. But this book is primarily an account of the intricate business dealings of David Jackson. He spent eight years supervising field operations and planning trapping strategies for the trading firms of Smith, Jackson and Sublette. After leaving the mountains Jackson returned to Missouri to settle his late brother's financial estate. Next he was off to try his hand in the compelling

Santa Fe trade and Taos trade.

Interwoven into the fur trade economy involving American and British trappers is the story of an individual's dissatisfaction with home life and his need to secure financial stability for the family he left behind. For all of his travels across the continent and all of the business ventures, David Jackson did not turn as great a profit as he had hoped.

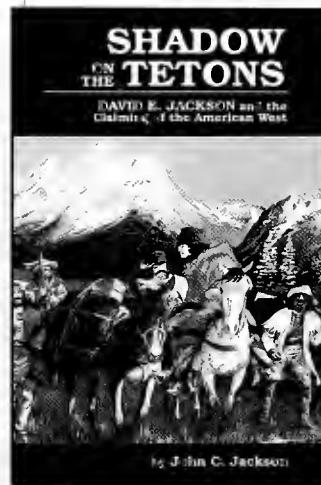
John C. Jackson completes the work begun by David Jackson's great-grandson, Carl D.W. Hays. According to the author, Hays "devoted his life to collecting every scrap of information on his forbearer and pressed his research into areas where less committed scholars had not ventured" (p. xi). Carl Hays passed away in 1979 leaving his research unfinished.

Jackson's research includes new evidence from the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company. The fact that David Jackson left little written evidence about his business dealings or his life in the Rocky Mountains makes this documentation quite valuable. Many of author Jackson's previous articles focus on Canadian aspects of the fur trade. In this book he utilizes that research to provide a balanced picture of the fur trade when boundaries of the American West were still in dispute.

This book is well written and well documented. It should be of value to anyone with an interest in the American fur trade.

TAMSEN HERT  
REFERENCE LIBRARIAN AND HISTORY  
BIBLIOGRAPHER  
COE LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING  
LARAMIE

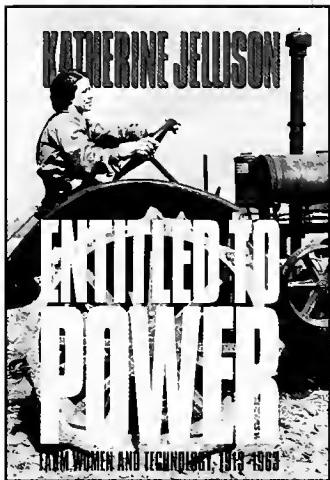
## SHADOW ON THE TETONS: DAVID E. JACKSON AND THE CLAIMING OF THE AMERICAN WEST



BY JOHN C. JACKSON

MISSOULA: MOUNTAIN PRESS PUBLISHING COMPANY, 1993. ILLUSTRATIONS, MAPS, NOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX. XII AND 241 PAGES.  
CLOTH \$24.00

ENTITLED TO POWER:  
FARM WOMEN  
AND TECHNOLOGY,  
1913-1963



BY KATHERINE JELLISON

CHAPEL HILL: THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NORTH CAROLINA PRESS, 1993.  
ILLUSTRATIONS, TABLES, NOTES,  
INDEX. XXII AND 217 PAGES. CLOTH  
\$39.95 PAPER \$13.95.

The mechanization of the family farm during the twentieth century was a process nothing short of revolutionary. With the affordability of the automobile and tractor, the advent of radio, and rural electrification there came a transformation of rural life that not only increased agricultural production but

also kept the patriarchal structure of the small farm intact.

In *Entitled to Power*, Katherine Jellison examines the impact of the "New Agriculture" on farm women from Indiana to North Dakota. Jellison effectively argues that, while rural women welcomed the modernization of farm life, they resisted the notion that such advancements would make them full-time homemakers. Farm women have always been producers or integral contributors to the success of the family farm, Jellison argues, despite the fact that women's field work has long been considered to be merely "helping out" their male counterparts. As she so gracefully concludes: "For the farm women of 1963, as for their grandmothers in 1913, the scope of their work ranged far beyond the farmhouse threshold."

Using oral histories, popular publications such as *Wallaces' Farmer*, appliance advertisements and government records, Jellison offers a comprehensive portrait of the heartland's rural women from the Progressive era to the postwar

years. Her study is a fascinating example of the intersection of women's history, rural life and the culture of work. The true value of Jellison's book is that it successfully deflates the concept of "separate spheres" that women and men supposedly inhabited in the past.

As a 1935 advertisement for a motor-driven Maytag washer declared: "Farm women are also entitled to power." By the early 1940s many of those women did, indeed, enjoy the advantages of labor-saving devices in their homes. However, despite such domestic advancements most women continued to contribute to farm productivity and showed little interest in increasing their housebound activities.

From 1913 on, agricultural reformers promised rural women that mechanization would free them from farm-task drudgery. While women sought more independence as farm life changed, Jellison points out that the New Agriculture functioned within the structure of the old patriarchy.

A solid and engaging study of dramatic change, *Entitled to Power* offers many insights about the enticements of the new, and the durability of the old, in American rural life.

SARAH E. SHARBACH  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF HISTORY  
SALISBURY STATE UNIVERSITY  
SALISBURY, MARYLAND

Peter John De Smet's story is set against the backdrop of momentous changes when White Americans replaced Native Americans as masters of the Great Plains. Although it is ostensibly a biography, John J. Killoren uses the missionary's life as a vehicle to explore the "Indian tragedy," the end of a way of life. This well-organized work traces the history of Indian-White relations at a time when private citizens and the

United States government levied upon Indians the price of western expansion.

De Smet was born in Belgium in 1798. Assigned to the Jesuit community based in St. Louis, his arrival in 1823 coincided with the first large-scale invasion of the Great Plains by White Americans when trappers traveled up the Missouri River and its branches in search of fur riches. De Smet participated in the last rendezvous in 1840,

and the following year joined an emigrant wagon train led by Thomas Fitzpatrick to the Pacific. It was then that he gained firsthand experience in the problems Indians faced. However, his greatest contribution to missionary work was not ministering to Indians, but in Catholic fund-raising and recruiting efforts. He made nine trips to Europe, returning each time with recruits and money.

From his initial foray into the Plains at a time when the Indians were enjoying the golden years of the buffalo culture, to his last trip up the Missouri River in 1870 after that lifestyle had become untenable, De Smet devoted his life to working with Native Americans. He was honored as an authority on, and advocate for, Native Americans. Widely publicized, his writings reveal sympathy for the Indian plight. He expressed dismay at the loss of their cultures, and concern for the future of a people under siege by famine, war, disease and the vices of civilization which carried them off by the thousands. In recognition of his accomplishments, the king of Belgium in 1865 made De Smet a Knight of the Order of Leopold.

The fifty years he spent in the American West saw important changes, and De Smet was a participant in that change, working as a dedicated activist for his beloved Indians. A virtual "Who's Who" in nineteenth century Plains history parades through the pages of this book, for De Smet crossed the paths of Jim Bridger, Thomas Fitzpatrick, John C. Fremont, Marcus Whitman, John James Audubon, Brigham Young and Edwin Denig, as well as important Native American leaders like Red Cloud and Spotted Tail.

Killoren concludes the west was not "won". Rather, conditions on the Plains changed so radically that Indians were unable to maintain their dominance. Settlers migrating to Oregon, miners traveling to California and Colorado, and Mormons moving

to Utah were joined in the 1860s by the transcontinental railroad. All seriously affected the buffalo herds and the Indians who depended upon them, undermining Native American ability to sustain themselves. Their culture destroyed, Indians were no longer an impediment to Manifest Destiny. As early as 1858 De Smet had become convinced that the Indians had to assimilate or be exterminated, and he tried to convince them of the benefits of assimilation.

Retired from St. Stephens Mission on the Wind River Reservation, Killoren shares De Smet's sensitivity for the Plains Indian experience during westward expansion. He provides details on treaties offering protection against bad White men which the government failed to enforce, atrocities committed by scheming Whites who stole Indian lands, and corrupt Indian agents who swindled their charges out of promised annuities. Killoren traces the dispossession of the Indians, portraying them as victims of White prejudice and land hunger. The Indian Office, he charges, took no steps to protect Indians or to fulfill the terms of numerous treaties which the government had negotiated with Native Americans.

Nicely illustrated, the book features clear prose and a wealth of historic detail. Killoren's impressive bibliography includes De Smet's published and unpublished writings, biographies, government documents, theses, dissertations, newspapers, and a host of books and articles covering a wide range of topics relating to the nineteenth century West. The result is an impressive amount of research and an effective use of primary sources.

If there is a fault with the book it lies in Killoren's neglect of Indian motivations. We understand what drove De

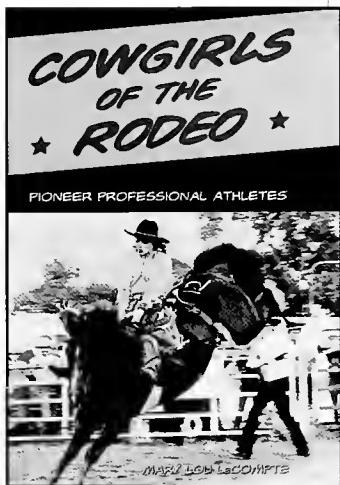
## "COME, BLACKROBE": DE SMET AND THE INDIAN TRAGEDY



BY JOHN J. KILLOREN

S.J. NORMAN: UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA PRESS, 1994. XV AND 448 PAGES. ILLUSTRATIONS, MAPS, NOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX.  
CLOTH \$29.95

## COWGIRLS OF THE RODEO: PIONEER PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES



BY MARY LOU LECOMPTE

URBANA: UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
PRESS, 1993. XII AND 272 PAGES.  
ILLUSTRATIONS, APPENDICES, NOTES,  
BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY, INDEX.  
CLOTH, \$22.50

Smet to minister to his flock, but why did the Native Americans seek out De Smet and other Catholic missionaries? What drove them to establish alliances with these Whites? Why did they choose to be baptized by the thousands, to participate in rituals foreign to their traditional religions? Did De Smet and the Indians share a common understanding of baptism and conversion, or did Indians incorporate aspects of Christianity while retaining much of the faith of their forefathers? What must the Indians have thought in 1858 when De Smet arrived as a Major of the Army of Utah, preaching non-violence to warriors and coun-

seling tribes to forego armed rebellion against invading Whites who were destroying their game and appropriating their land? Did they believe that De Smet, the emissary of an enemy band of warriors, remained their friend, advocated their rights, and represented their best interests? Perhaps the answers to these questions can form the basis of Killoren's next book.

DR. BOBBLEE SCHULER  
HAY SPRINGS, NEBRASKA

Mary Lou LeCompte, Associate Professor of Kinesiology and Health Education at the University of Texas at Austin, should be congratulated for writing this volume about women rodeo athletes. Much like the women who participated in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, the achievements of the Girls Rodeo Association (now the Women's Professional Rodeo Association) have been ignored by historians. However, LeCompte has resurrected female stars such as Lucille Mulhall, Lulu Belle Parr, Vera McGinnis, Florence Hughes Randolph, Tad Lucas and Mabel Strickland from the dustbin of history, arguing: "Rodeo cowgirls proved that women could compete in a rough, physically demanding, and theoretically macho sport, endure falls, breaks, and bruises, and still earn the respect and admiration of millions." (p. 4)

The story of professionalism of women on the rodeo circuit was not one of linear progress. LeCompte notes that lost was the one thing that made them "exceptional among all female athletes in American history, the ability to compete as equals with men in an otherwise all-male contest." (p. 196) Initially, rigid gender lines were often blurred on the

ranches of the American frontier, as in the Wild West shows and rodeo contests (such as the Cheyenne Frontier Days and Calgary Stampede) of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when women competed on an equal basis for prize money in bronco-busting, roping and relay races. While the 1920s witnessed gender separation in rodeo competition, the position of cowgirls was well established. Athletes were accepted by Eastern audiences in major arenas during the golden age of sport, but changes were looming in the 1930s. The death of Bonnie McCarroll at the Pendleton Roundup led most rodeos in the West to discontinue bronc riding events for women, while the formation of the promotional Rodeo Association of America, and the Cowboys Turtle Association in which female rodeo performers were non-voting members, led to a reduced role for women on the rodeo circuit. The segregation process was completed by singing cowboy and film star Gene Autry who gained a virtual monopoly over the big-time rodeo business in the early 1940s and preferred that rodeo cowgirls be "mere props, whose primary purpose was to make the cowboys look good" (p. 137).

In the final section of her book

LeCompte relates how in 1947 rodeo stars such as Jackie Worthington, Fern Sawyer and Dixie Reger Mosley, a group better educated than the first generation of female rodeo competitors, formed the Girls Rodeo Association which evolved into the Women's Professional Rodeo Association (WPRA). LeCompte describes the WPRA as "an organization of women, governed entirely by women, and designed to meet the distinctive needs, interests, and abilities of women." (p. 196) It advocated professionalism for female rodeo athletes through the vehicle of all-cowgirl rodeos and insisted that the popular barrel racing events be properly compensated and included in the National Finals Rodeo.

LeCompte tells her story in a straightforward, easy to follow, narrative approach, although one must read carefully in order not to become confused with the acronyms for rodeo as-

sociations or by the many biographical sketches included in this volume. The historical context of rodeo cowgirls within women's sport history is well established, but some readers might prefer more consideration of how women's rodeo history fits into the broader historiography of the America West. Well-documented and researched, the book is based upon newspaper accounts, the archives of the WPRA, relevant secondary material and interviews with many of the cowgirls. LeCompte has made an important contribution to the growing literature in the too long-neglected field of women and sport.

RON BRILEY  
ASSISTANT HEADMASTER  
SANDIA PREPARATORY SCHOOL  
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

From Owen Wister's *The Virginian* in 1902, through John Wayne and the heyday of the Hollywood western, to the big-hatted country music stars of the 1990s, America has had an enduring love affair with cowboy culture. This tradition continues with the release of Keith and Rusty McNeil's *Cowboy Songs*. The fifty-song, two cassette anthology chronicles cowboy history through song and narration.

The songs are primarily from the years 1865 to 1890, the boom years for western settlement, open range ranching and the cowboys. The McNeils include many classic cowboy songs such as *Home on the Range*, *Goodbye Old Paint*, and *Streets of Laredo* as well as lesser-known songs such as *The Zebra Dun* and *Juan Murray*. These are authentic songs from the trails and campfires originally sung by working cowhands in the nineteenth century. The songs are broken down into four categories: The Beginnings, Cowboy Life, From Texas to Kansas, and On the

Trail. Concise narrative transitions effectively tie the songs together. The narrations are clear and direct, aimed at an audience with little or no background in the topic. The musical arrangements are simple and folksy, as they should be, featuring vocals, guitar, banjo and other acoustic instruments.

The project is an ambitious one: to inform us about the history, hard work, brave deeds, lost loves and everyday life of the cowboy. These songs remind us that the cowboy's life was marked by long, lonely hours of body-punishing tasks at low pay. In the twentieth century we were lured by popular songs and western serials into romanticizing and nostalgicizing the cowboy's life. These folksongs, unattached to Nashville's Music Row and New York's Tin Pan Alley, give a realistic picture of the cowboy.

However, in their quest to inform and educate, the McNeils perform many

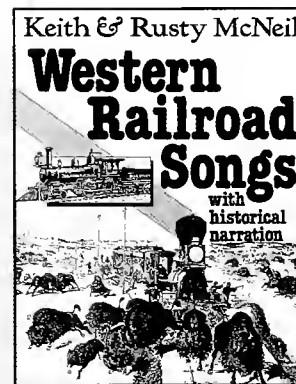
## COWBOY SONGS



BY KEITH AND RUSTY MCNEIL

RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA: WEM RECORDS, 1994. SET OF TWO AUDIO CASSETTES \$19.95

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of these songs with little passion or enthusiasm. Contrasted to recent cowboy collections by Ian Tyson and Michael Martin Murphey, or older recordings by Woody Guthrie and Ramblin' Jack Eliot, the McNeils sound uninspired. These renditions are missing the heart and soul of the bunkhouse, trail and saloon.

The sixth and latest installment of the McNeils' series is *Western Railroad Songs*. Once again, this installment contains two cassettes with three hours of music and narration. Several other musicians join the McNeils in this collection, adding some fiddle, bass, mandolin, vocals and harmony.

The songs are organized into four categories: The Builders, The Golden Spike, The Railroaders and Five Transcontinental Railroads. Most of the songs, which date back to the nineteenth century, chronicle the decades of frantic railroad development and star the financiers, engineers, pioneers, hoboies, laborers and outlaws of the era.

The McNeils' song collecting and research efforts are commendable. This project reminds me of the blood, sweat

and hard work required to join America's two coasts by rail. Included among the fifty songs are many standards such as *900 Miles*, *Rock Island Line*, *Jesse James*, and *Casey Jones*. Many overlooked cuts are included as well such as *The Handcart Song*, *Subsidy*, and *The Harvey Girls*.

In these tapes as well as those of *Cowboy Songs*, the McNeils' main goal is to instruct rather than to entertain. They cover the songs accurately and professionally but without much joy or vigor. What should be an exciting ride through one of the most colorful chapters of American history often becomes dry and laborious. Contrast this recording to recordings by Utah Phillips, Larry Penn and Johnny Cash to hear what I mean.

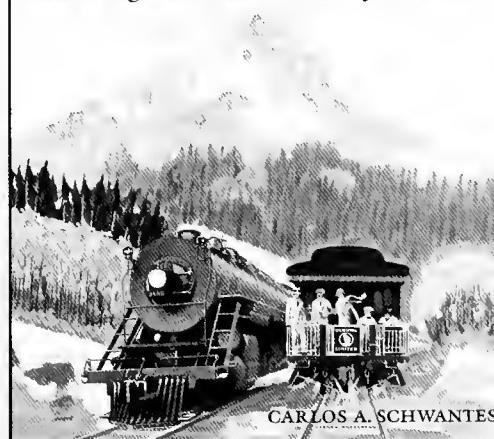
CHRIS KENNEDY  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF COMMUNICATIONS  
WESTERN WYOMING COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
ROCK SPRINGS

It is hard to imagine any scholar more qualified to write a history about the impact of railroads on the Pacific Northwest than Carlos Schwantes. The author of numerous books and articles on the political economy of the area, including state and regional histories and studies of labor unrest and transportation, Schwantes brings to the subject over two decades of research and writing on related topics. The end result is neither a coffee table book nor a scholarly monograph, but a lavishly illustrated volume based on a wide range of primary and secondary materials. Scholars of the Pacific Northwest may not discover new or original interpretations, but they and general readers will find a well-written narrative synthesized from existing literature as well as enlightening, fresh material based on primary research.

In the absence of major navigable waterways east of the Pacific coast and Puget Sound, European and American settlers of the region improvised with shallow draft boats, portages, wagons, carts, pack animals and their backs to move goods into the hinterland. Such means of conveyance simply could not transport to market the lumber, minerals, wheat and other extractive products that flowed from mines, farms and ranches. The development of the area depended on the coming of economical and efficient transportation: the railroad. Schwantes shows how railways opened the territories, then the states of Montana, Idaho, Oregon and Washington, to

## RAILROAD SIGNATURES ACROSS THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

*Railroad Signatures across the Pacific Northwest*

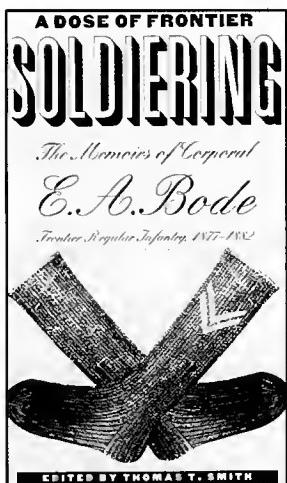


CARLOS A. SCHWANTES

BY CARLOS A. SCHWANTES

SEATTLE: UNIVERSITY OF  
WASHINGTON PRESS, 1993.  
360 PAGES. ILLUSTRATIONS, MAPS,  
NOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX.  
CLOTH \$50.00

A DOSE OF FRONTIER  
SOLDIERING: THE  
MEMOIRS OF  
CORPORAL E.A. BODE,  
FRONTIER REGULAR  
INFANTRY, 1877-1882



EDITED BY THOMAS T. SMITH

LINCOLN: UNIVERSITY OF  
NEBRASKA PRESS, 1994. X AND 237  
PAGES. ILLUSTRATION, NOTES,  
BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX.  
CLOTH \$29.95

settlement by large numbers of immigrants from the East and abroad. Scattered and isolated communities were joined to national and international arteries of commerce by iron and steel rails. By the 1870s the Pacific Northwest had entered a global economy with all its opportunities and perils.

Railroad Signatures is business and economic history, but it is also social history in the best sense of the term. One of the many strengths of the book is the focus on not only famous people like James J. Hill and E. H. Harriman and their properties such as the Great Northern and Union Pacific railroads, but also on small-scale entrepreneurs, shortline railroads, and places such as Oregon's Sumpter Valley and the Camas Prairie of Idaho. Schwantes has a good sense of regional society and his pages are populated with lumberjacks, fruit growers, ranchers and small town businesspeople who created commodities the railways hauled. The railroad-

ers themselves are major actors as well. Many readers will be surprised to discover the large number of Japanese laborers used to construct and maintain the railways. Schwantes also discusses the rise of tourism and the coming of the luxury passenger train, which he juxtaposes against the arrival of the automobile in the 1920s and the rise of airline traffic after 1945.

Thanks to a generous grant from Burlington Northern Railroad, the University of Washington Press has produced a beautiful, color-filled, large format book that enhances Schwantes' narrative. Both the author and the Press can be proud of this successful collaboration.

KEITH L. BRYANT, JR.  
PROFESSOR OF HISTORY  
THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON  
AKRON, OHIO

Born in Schonhagen, Hanover, in 1856, Emil George Adolph Bode enlisted in Company D, Sixteenth Infantry on March 1, 1877. For the next five years he served in Louisiana, Indian Territory, New Mexico and Texas. Home was, in turn, Fort Sill, the Kiowa-Comanche Reservation, Fort Gibson and Fort Davis. His only venture on the war trail was in May, 1880, when his regiment participated in the last phase of the Victorio Campaign, failing to engage the Apaches in combat but logging endless miles in the pursuit. A few days after promotion to sergeant in February 1882 Bode received his discharge, forsaking the army for what apparently was a career in surveying and operating out of Chicago and Dayton. Evidence indicates that sometime between 1884 and 1889 he authored the manuscripts that

appear in revised form in this volume as his military memoirs.

Accounts written by enlisted men are rare, especially those who served in the infantry. This memoir is even more unusual in its descriptive power and for the information it contains about topics not ordinarily found in its genre. As expected, the reader will find much practical advice on how to survive in the frontier army: how to remove the salt from pork by slight boiling, making what was called Cincinnati chicken; how to hunt turkeys at night by firing at roosting silhouettes; and how to arrange a comfortable tent utilizing bayonets for candle stick holders.

Especially interesting is a view of the army underworld, the less than admirable, often ingenious system that evolved to exact personal gain at the expense of the public and one's comrades. While not a participant, Bode adeptly recounts in detail how soldiers

gambled in darkened outhouses after taps, how they stole federal arms and clothing to sell for liquor, and how as guards and inmates they overpowered and robbed the newest prisoner. Officers, too, were involved. First among those having the opportunity for graft was the post quartermaster, controlling as he did much of the Army's property and livestock. A larcenous overseer might use the same dead mule in successive daily reports on the demise of three mules, selling two to passing civilians. Bode also provides evaluations of officers with whom he was acquainted. He named Col. Ranald S. Mackenzie as the only man fit to command against Indians and dismissed Col. Benjamin H. Grierson with the terse comment that he "preferred the safe side." (p. 41)

Some historians will frown on the methodology used in creating a published text out of Bode's original draft, a revision covering the 1887-1880 period, some material apparently prepared for later insertion, and his complete journal for the years 1881 and 1882. In combining these documents Smith changed punctuation, did away with phonetic spellings, and reconciled tenses. Nevertheless, supplied with an excellent introduction and ample footnotes that explicate the memoir and place it in context, *A Dose of Frontier Soldiering* ranks as one of the best enlisted men accounts yet published.

JOHN D. McDERMOTT  
CHAIRMAN, OLD WEST TRAILS ASSOCIATION  
SHERIDAN, WYOMING



# THE HOG RANCHES OF WYOMING

LIQUOR, LUST, & LIES  
UNDER SAGEBRUSH SKIES

BY LARRY K. BROWN

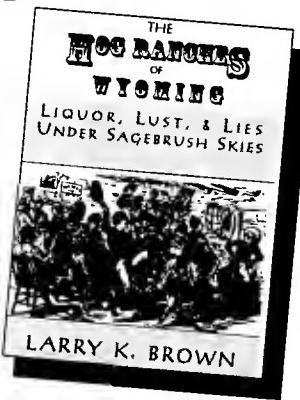
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MARK JUNGE, EDITOR, WYOMING ANNALS

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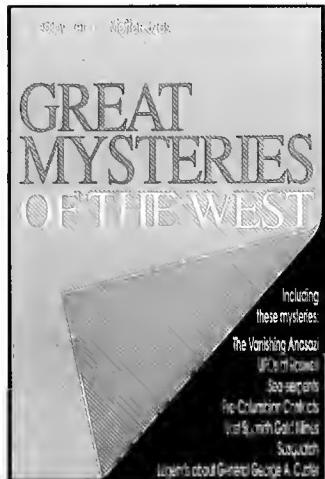
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## GREAT MYSTERIES OF THE WEST



EDITED BY  
FERENC MORTON SZASZ

GOLDEN, COLORADO: FULCRUM  
PUBLISHING, 1993. XXI AND 266  
PAGES. PHOTOGRAPHS,  
BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX.  
PAPER \$19.95

This anthology of fourteen essays explores a wide range of natural, cultural and historical mysteries in the Western United States. Although none of the mysteries is set in Wyoming, we certainly have our own analogies.

The mysteries fall into five categories: creatures unknown to science such as sea serpents and sasquatch figures in the Pacific Northwest; enigmas surrounding Native American groups including the question of pre-Columbian contact between whites and natives, and the fate of the Anasazi; unexplained phenomena such as the apparition of a seventeenth century Spanish nun in New Mexico, and twentieth century reports of flying saucers at Roswell, New Mexico; historical legends about the Battle of the Little Big-horn, and the origin of Turkey Red wheat in Kansas in the nineteenth century; and lost mines and treasures including stories about Rocky Bar, Idaho and Spanish explorers in California.

The purpose of the volume is to provide a scholarly balance to the usual sensationalized treatment of these subjects. The authors are scholars in oceanography, history, astronomy, folklore, anthropology and American studies. Each provides a historical survey of the mystery's

account and possible explanations without drawing conclusions. The essays are all written for a general rather than an academic audience.

In some cases the mystery is a problem of interpretation of eyewitness accounts or material evidence, and in others it boils down to the question of belief. But in spite of their widely different topics, each author draws somewhat similar conclusions. They agree that mysteries are more significant in themselves than they would be as solved puzzles. The value of mysteries, says Michael Welsh in the final essay, isn't in their solution but rather in the process of seeking the truth. All of the mysteries give people something to ponder, allowing them to use their imaginations to devise explanations without the reward of ever really knowing the answers. Indeed, all these authors argue, something valuable would be lost if everything was known.

BARBARA ALLEN BOGART  
FOLKLORIST  
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### BOOK NOTES

*American Indian Treaties: The History of a Political Anomaly* by Francis J. Paul Prucha. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994. Cloth \$45.00.

A comprehensive examination of Indian treaties in American history from the standpoint that Indians were put into a position of dependence and inequality.

*The Dream Seekers: Native American Visionary Traditions of the Great Plains* by Lee Irwin. Norman:

University of Oklahoma Press, 1994. Cloth \$26.95.

*A study of the role of visionary dreams in Plains Indian society.*

*Early Mormon Documents: Volume One* edited by Dan Vogel. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, Inc., 1995. 800 pages. Cloth \$34.95.

*First in a three-volume, annotated reference series of all known primary documents relating to the origins of the Mormon church. Volume One relates to the Vermont and New Hampshire period.*

*Fur Traders, Trappers and Mountain Men of the Upper Missouri* edited by LeRoy R. Hafen. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995. 152 pages. Paper \$8.95.

*Eighteen biographies compiled from the ten-volume Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West series edited by LeRoy R. Hafen.*

*In the World: The Diaries of Reed Smoot* edited by Havard S. Heath.

continued next page

B O O K  
N O T E S

...continued from previous page

Salt Lake City: Signature Books, Inc., 1995. 800 pages. Cloth \$95.00

*Diaries of Senator Reed Smoot (1903-1933) and insight into his political conservatism, his cultural background and his image of modern America.*

*Indians and the American West in the Twentieth Century* by Donald L. Parman. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. Cloth \$29.95, paper, \$12.95

A concise overview of twentieth century Indian history.

*The Photograph and the American Indian* by Alfred L. Bush and Lee Clark Mitchell. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994. Cloth \$79.50

*A pictorial history of Indians from 1840 to the present.*

*River of Promise, River of Peril: The Politics of Managing the Missouri River* by John E. Thorson. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994. 284 pages. Cloth \$29.95

*Management and development of the Missouri River Basin from 1944 to the present.*

*Rooted in Dust: Surviving Drought and Depression in Southwestern Kansas* by Pamela Riney-Kehrberg.

Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995. 264 pages. Cloth \$25.00

*The impact of drought and depression upon the cultural life of a southern plains community.*

*The U.S. Army in the West, 1870-1880: Uniforms, Weapons, and Equipment* by Douglas C. McChristian. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995. 384 pages. Cloth \$34.95

McChristian examines the development of army uniforms, equipment and arms, arguing that the frontier experience shaped and standardized materiel.

## NOW AVAILABLE IN PAPERBACK/REPRINT...

*American Indian Tribal Governments* by Sharon O'Brien. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994 (originally 1989). 368 pages. Paper \$17.95

*A Century of Dishonor: A Sketch of the United States Government's Dealings with Some of the Indian Tribes* by Helen Hunt Jackson. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995 (Originally 1881). 552 pages. Paper \$14.95.

*Converting the West: A Bibliography of Narcissa Whitman* by Julie Roy Jeffrey. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994 (originally 1991). 256 pages. Paper \$12.95

*Custer's Last Stand: The Anatomy of an American Myth* by Brian W. Dippie. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994 (originally 1976). 214 pages. Paper \$8.95.

*The Far Western Frontiers, 1830-1860* by Ray Allen Billington. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995 (originally 1956). 368 pages. Paper \$16.95.

*The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* by Francis Paul Prucha. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995 (originally 1984). Unabridged Volumes 1 and 2 combined, 1334 pages. Paper \$50.00.

*Hell on Horses and Women* by Alice Marriott. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994 (originally 1953). 304 pages. Paper \$14.95

*Jackson Hole. Crossroads of the Western Fur Trades 1807-1840* by Merrill J. Mattes. Jackson, Wyoming: Jackson Hole Museum & Teton County Historical Society, 1994 (originally 1987). 95 pages. Paper \$5.95.

*Red Man's Land/White Man's Law: The Past and Present Status of the American Indian* by Wilcomb E. Washburn. (2nd edition) Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995 (originally 1971). 320 pages. Paper \$14.95.

*The Winning of the West* by Theodore Roosevelt. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995 (originally 1905). 4 vols., 1576 pages. Paper, each volume \$15.00.

*Yellowstone Command: Colonel Nelson A. Miles and the Great Sioux War, 1876-1877* by Jerome A. Greene. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994 (originally 1991). 333 pages. Paper \$13.95



## UNFORGIVEN



WARNER BROTHERS, 1992  
WARNER HOME VIDEO, 1993  
130 MINUTES, RATED R

Clint Eastwood's *Unforgiven*, his first western since *Pale Rider* in 1985, is a lean and provocative film. It is a graceful meditation on the Old West, courage, bravery, and respect. It is also Eastwood's homage to the Sergio Leone spaghetti western films which made him infamous as the "Man With No Name," the avenging guardian. In *Unforgiven* Eastwood deliberately blurs the lines between virtue and villainy. By the end of the film the viewer is left wondering if the bad guys are the policemen or the killers, or if the difference between the two is no more significant than a character flaw.

*Unforgiven* opens with a long shot of a lonely ranch in 1880. The hero, William Munny (Clint Eastwood), stands in silhouette by a leafless autumnal tree beneath which his wife is buried. He credits her with having tamed him, single-handedly transforming him from a vicious, soulless drunk who admits to having killed women and children, into a sober upright citizen able to accept responsibility for recognizing the difference between right and wrong. He is now a mediocre hog farmer eking out a livelihood for himself and his two small children. Any delusions of outlaw grandeur have been replaced by the realities of his retired life.

All this changes with the news of a \$1,000 bounty for two cowboys who mutilated a prostitute in Big Whiskey,

Wyoming. The situation is set up slowly and elaborately. Big Whiskey is a town controlled by Little Bill Daggett (Gene Hackman), a sheriff who exudes the same, barely controlled brutality as Munny. Firearms are not permitted by ordinance in Big Whiskey and Daggett takes great pains to settle arguments peacefully. When a cowboy slashes a prostitute for mocking his Manhood, Daggett fines him and his partner seven horses, payable to the saloon owner as compensatory damages despite the protests of Strawberry Alice (Frances Fisher), the eldest and most maternal whore. Enraged, she raises \$1,000 bounty for the two cowboys' heads.

Enter The Schofield Kid (Jaimee Woollett), myopic virgin in the killing game. He's smart enough to know that information is power and he is among the first to learn of the \$1,000 reward. He is also smart enough to realize he needs experienced help to accomplish his goal. Of course, each time the tale is retold it grows more exaggerated and gruesome. He catches Munny vulnerable and bored, and though Munny resists at first, he eventually reasons that the violence which will befall the two cowboys is vindication of the defenseless. This is morally defensible and consistent with Munny's oath to the memory of his wife. What they did was not "wickedness in a regular way", but rather so unforgivable as to resurrect the outlaw in him. Munny recruits his old partner, Ned Logan (Morgan Freeman), another housebro-

ken ex-outlaw living in domesticity. The two philosophize about death and violence and the danger they are courting by risking a return to their old ways. "We done stuff for money before, Will," Ned reminds him. After learning of the cruelty and brutality of the cowboys' deed, it is with great relief that he exclaims, "Bingo. Well I guess they got it coming then." Will sums up the situation for both of them when he says, "I'm just a fella now. I ain't no different than anyone else." Just a couple of guys trying to deny their dark pasts who believe that their character flaws were temporary and changeable rather than indelible.

The remainder of *Unforgiven* follows the tracks of the bounty hunters. They include Richard Harris as English Bob, the famous gunfighter whose nefarious reputation for amorality and savagery belies his elegant veneer and accent. He is followed puppy fashion by an obviously Eastern, pulp Western magazine writer, W.W. Beauchamp (Saul Rubinek), a bespectacled leech whose presence uncomfortably foreshadows the coming of civilization to this undisciplined land. Sooner or later they all end up in Big Whiskey. Little Bill has ample opportunity to display the violent and sadistic side of his personality which he legitimizes by wearing a badge. And this is truly the point of the film: what happens, Eastwood seems to ask, when people live in a

society where killing is permitted? What does it mean to actually kill a man? Is there justifiable homicide? "It's a helluva thing, killing a man," Will tells the Kid after he is deflowered. "You take away all he's got, all he's ever gonna." ... "I guess he had it comin'," the Kid says hopefully. "Kid," replies Will, "we all got it comin'." The frontier was hardly an idyll; it was dirty, violent, uncultured and rough. Those who peopled it were not heroes; they were just trying to survive as best they could.

*Unforgiven*, directed and produced by Eastwood, was nominated for nine Academy Awards. It won four, including Best Picture, Best Director, Best Supporting Actor (Gene Hackman) and Best Editing. Eastwood also was named Best Director by the Directors Guild of America. The most lucrative attraction to filmgoers for the last 20 years, Clint Eastwood finally gained artistic credibility and respect with this thoughtful, well-executed and certainly successful film. Even those not usually susceptible to his appeal or the lure of Westerns will be affected and entertained by the tale of the self-deprecating good guy with the natural propensity to be bad.

SHELLEY A. SACKETT  
VIDEO REVIEW EDITOR  
CHEYENNE

From its opening horizon of shadow-shrouded mountains lying darkly under the distant heavy overcast and the empty, two-lane highway running off into the gloom, *Red Rock West* virtually oozes with director John Dahl's own flavor of *film noir*. Traditionally, *film noir* depicts the dark, wet streets of an urban night for its setting, but John Dahl has taken the labyrinthine criminal plotting of the big city and placed it squarely in the decayed, fictional, eight building com-

munity of Red Rock, Wyoming, which is supposed to sit on highway 489 West (489 runs north and south).

The trapped hero of this morality play is Michael Williams (Nicholas Cage) an ex-Marine who is a victim of his own sense of honesty. Losing out on a oil rig job on highway 489, he spends his last \$5.00 for gas to take him to the community of Red Rock, where *continued* employment opportunities have been sug-

## RED ROCK WEST



RED ROCK FILMS, INC., 1992  
COLUMBIA TRISTAR  
HOME VIDEO, 1993  
98 MINUTES, NO RATING

## REVIEW

gested. In the Red Rock Bar, he meets the bartender, Wayne (J.T. Walsh), who immediately confronts him with "I thought you were supposed to be here last Friday. I was beginning to think I'd have to find somebody else!" Taken aback and thinking that a job is in the offing, Michael lets Wayne think he is "Lyle from Dallas." It doesn't take Michael long to learn, however, that Wayne has hired "Lyle" to kill his wife. To Michael's empty wallet, the \$5,000 is an overwhelming temptation ... "I hate to see an innocent woman get ... but it's an awful lot of money" and his thought is to take the money, inform the wife, then split. Matters start to convolute, however, when Wayne's wife, Suzanne (Lara Flynn Boyle), doubles the offer—to kill her husband. Soon after, Michael discovers that Wayne is really the sheriff of Red Rock. Many surprises await. The plot has more twists and turns than a two-lane blacktop through the Big Horn Mountains. And Suzanne, moderate by most *film noir* standards, like most *femmes fatales*, is dangerous to the end.

*Red Rock West* is a surprising and complex thriller which reshapes the *film noir* tradition with a strong western flavor. Set in fall, its images are of death, decay and rust reflecting the moral and even spiritual decay of the town's isolation. The ancient wrought-iron signs which announce the entrance and exit of the bare community erupt with blood-like rust through failing white paint just as personal hate and greed seep through its characters. In this small, isolated western town secrets have long been buried, but now they rise to the surface and burst forth in murder and blackmail.

Surprisingly, the film was originally released on cable, making its first appearance on the *Showtime* channel in 1993. It was destined for obscurity until Roxie Releasing spotted it, recognized its unusual qualities and contracted for its distribution in theaters across the country. John Dahl's previous film, *Kill Me Again* (1989), did not fare well in theaters so Dahl, with brother Rich, moved into cable production. The brothers' theme has been consistent, however. *Kill Me Again* was another subtle *film noir*

with a desperate *femme fatale*. The Dahl brothers' most recent film, again first released on cable (and thus out of the running for an Academy Award), is another shocking film noir to horrify the staid male concept of normality. In the now widely seen *The Last Seduction*, Linda Fiorentino, as a true *femme fatale*, emasculates the men in her life with the power of her sexuality.

This is a film set in Wyoming. Unfortunately, most of it was filmed either in Montana or Arizona despite its references to Laramie and Rawlins. What the viewer sees may be mistaken for Wyoming but it is not. Most is shot in Arizona, the community of Wilcox, and the train shots were done in Montana. While the film has its rewards, Wyoming residents can not somehow escape feeling cheated.

ROGER TAYLOR, JR.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH  
WESTERN WYOMING COLLEGE  
ROCK SPRINGS

### Focus continued from page 5...

tory and its critics because the issues these historians raise relate directly to broader cultural issues. They need to familiarize themselves with the work and participate in discussions provoked by new versions of their past. History is a dynamic discipline and historians see the past in dialogue with the present. They want to engage the public in discussion regarding issues of great importance such as defining who we are as Westerners ...and as Americans.

Finally, *Annals* readers need to question journalists, political pundits and academics who decry debate and insist on one, official interpretation of history for the American public. Most upsetting to me was the recent conflict over a Smithsonian Institution exhibit called "The West as America." Some people believed the exhibit's interpretation was too polemical, too negative about important American ideas—and yes, myths—regarding the West. The real tragedy was

not in the Smithsonian's interpretation, but rather in the successful efforts of some politicians to shut down the exhibit altogether. It was slated for Denver but the exhibit never made it to the Rockies. We were deprived of an opportunity to examine, discuss, or possibly challenge its interpretations and implications. Recently the turmoil over the Enola Gay concluded in the same fashion: the exhibit was essentially stripped of any interpretation whatsoever. Debate and dialogue ended with the muzzling of Smithsonian historians. To harken back to a New Western History term, we are all "losers" when that happens.

DR. SHERRY L. SMITH (1951-) IS AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS, EL PASO, AND PART-TIME RESIDENT OF MOOSE, WYOMING. SHE WAS A SURVEY HISTORIAN FOR THE WYOMING STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE (1980-81) AND TAUGHT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING (1982-84) AND

THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, BOULDER BEFORE MOVING TO UTEP IN 1985. SHE HAS WRITTEN TWO BOOKS: *The View From Officers' Row: Army Perceptions of Western Indians* (U. OF ARIZONA PRESS, 1990) AND *Sagebrush Soldier: Private William Earl Smith's View of the Sioux War of 1876* (U. OF COLORADO PRESS, 1989). THE PRINCIPAL FIGURE IN THE LATTER IS HER GREAT-GRANDFATHER. LAST YEAR SMITH RECEIVED A LOLA HOMSHER RESEARCH GRANT FROM THE WYOMING STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOR A PROJECT SHE IS CO-AUTHORING WITH ROBERT RIGTER ON "THE WOMEN OF JACKSON HOLE." AN ARTICLE DERIVED FROM THAT WORK, "A WOMAN'S LIFE IN THE TETON COUNTRY: GERALDINE LUCAS," WAS PUBLISHED IN *Montana, the Magazine of Western History* (SUMMER, 1994).

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